11-1370152-000089-10

ISSN : 1975-3586

International Journal of Intangible Heritage

Vol.3 2008



IJIH

ICOM
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF MUSEUMS
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MUSEES

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INTANGIBLE HERITAGE

http://www.ijih.org

The *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* is an annual refereed academic and professional English language journal dedicated to the promotion of the understanding of all aspects of the intangible heritage of the world and the communication of research and examples of good professional practice. Proposals for contributions to future volumes of the *Journal* are actively sought from all countries, professions and specialisms. (For full details of the editorial policies, the Instructions for Contributors, and PDF copies of all papers in previous volumes please see the Journal's website : [http://www.ijih.org]

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Government Publications Registration Number: 11-1370152-000089-10
ISSN: 1975-3586

International Journal of

Intangible Heritage

Vol.3 2008

MCST Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism
The National Folk Museum of Korea
ICOM Korean National Committee

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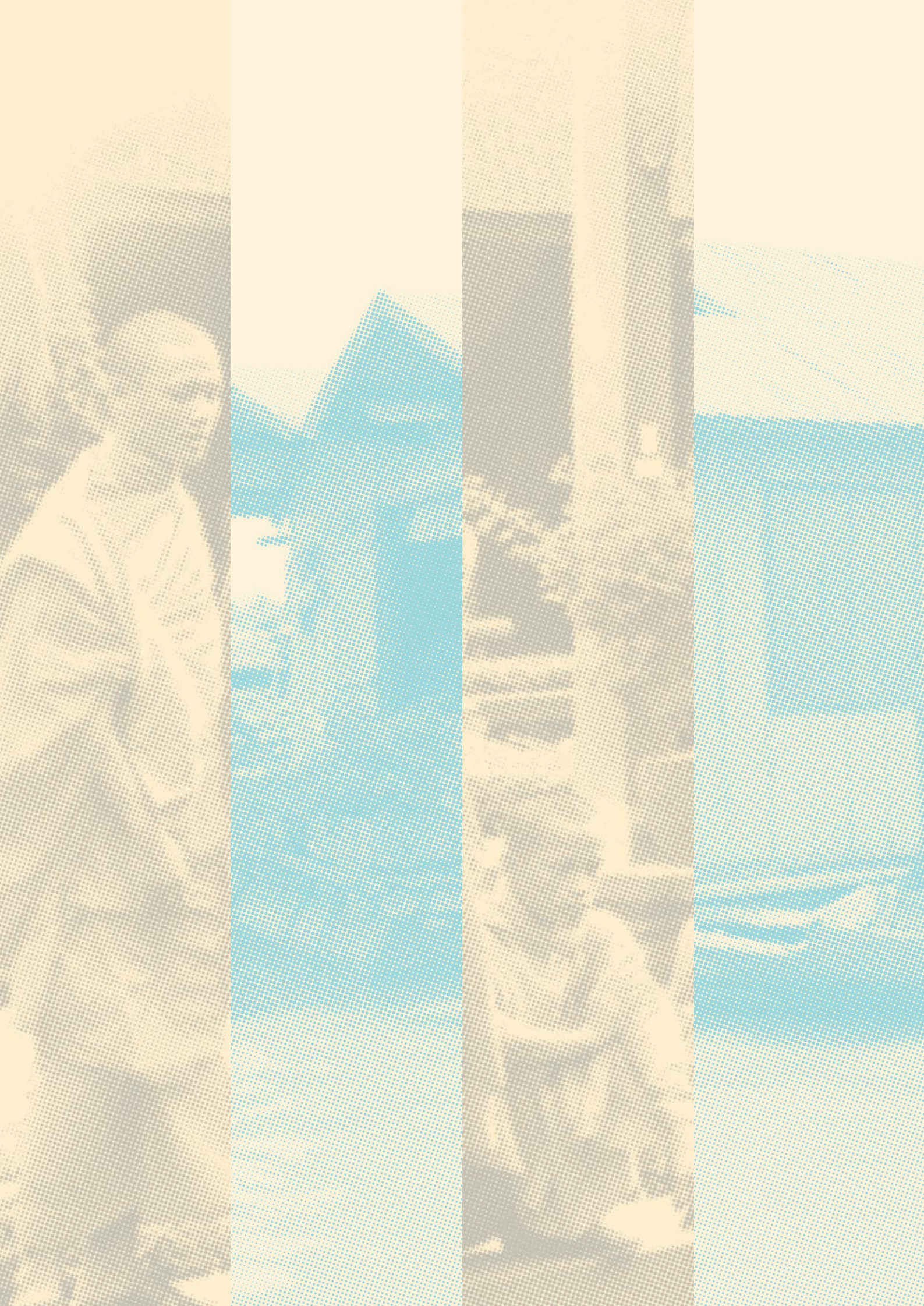
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Viewpoint

The First Voice in Heritage Conservation

Amareswar Galla



The First Voice in Heritage Conservation

Amareswar Galla
Professor, University of Queensland, Australia

ABSTRACT

The transformation of museological and heritage practices in the past decade continues to face challenges: not least in seeking to integrate tangible and intangible heritage. The majority of endeavours continue to aim to combine the established perspective of safeguarding the tangible heritage with approaches seeking to incorporate intangible heritage, but the dialogue is still largely being controlled by the 'establishment'. However, it is encouraging to report that demonstration projects have emerged using the concept of First Voice in order to find the balance between the old and new practices with respect for cultural diversity.

The First Voice

The last two decades in particular have seen the reworking of heritage policy and conservation from a hegemonic colonial or otherwise "first world" construct into an inclusive post-colonial practice, which has resulted in a transformative museum discourse. In this process, engagement with the increasingly important concept of the intangible heritage, standing alongside the long-established approach to the physical heritage, has been challenging for the 'establishment' working in heritage management, whether institutions, organisations or professional workers in the sector.[1]

The seminal meetings of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Shanghai 2002 and Seoul in 2004 provided unprecedented opportunities for intercultural dialogue, and in particular, for interrogating 'European' (including North American) paradigms and their colonial and post-colonial manifestations across the world.[2] These meetings further contributed to advancing the heritage movement towards a global venture that seeks to bring all the regions of the world into collaboration in exploring the ways and means to integrate tangible and intangible heritage into sustainable development. The axiomatic principle in this process is to recognise and

respect the First Voice - that is, the voice, both literal and metaphorical, of the actual carriers and custodians of cultures and their related heritage resources all over the world.[3]

The emerging notion of the First Voice is however most often associated with indigenous peoples at the present time, and it sits well ideologically with the better-known constructs of 'First Nations', 'First Peoples' or 'First Inhabitants'. The long struggle to ensure respect and recognition for the cultural rights of indigenous peoples required such critical positioning. In this respect, the 2007 *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* is a turning point for the world.[4] Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, said on the occasion of the adoption of the Declaration, that it:

> *has the distinction of being the only Declaration in the UN which was drafted with the rights-holders, themselves, the Indigenous People... [It] makes the opening phrase of the UN Charter, "We the People..." meaningful for the more than 370 million indigenous persons all over the world.*[5]

The Declaration poses several challenges and opportunities for intergovernmental bodies such as UNESCO and ICCROM and International Non-Governmental Organisations such as ICOM, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the International Council of Archives (ICA) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). The immediate challenge is to rethink their core methods of engaging with indigenous issues through ethical ways of working together with indigenous peoples. A salutary example is the process of engagement that led ICOM and the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) to work together in partnership with UNESCO, the Commonwealth Association of Museums and the constituent partners of the Pacific Asia Observatory for Cultural Diversity in Human Development in the drafting of the PIMA Code of Ethics for Museums and Cultural Centres in 2006.[6]



Figure 1
Ralph Regenvanu facilitating the drafting of the PIMA Code of Ethics in Canberra, Australia, February 2006. Photo. Amareswar Galla

The Director-General of UNESCO, Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, said that the approval of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is:

> *a milestone for indigenous peoples and all those who are committed to the protection and promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue....The newly adopted Declaration echoes the principles of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the related UNESCO Conventions, notably the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, all of which recognize the pivotal role of indigenous peoples as custodians of cultural diversity and biodiversity, embodied in the cultural and natural heritage.*[7]

Several articles of the 2007 *UN Declaration* draw attention to the significance of intangible heritage, in particular in Article 31.1:

> *Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.*

The Declaration also affirms that 'all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind'.

This is in line with the earlier emphasis of UNESCO that in order to protect the world's cultural diversity, we must give 'equal attention to its two basic ingredients, namely tangible heritage and intangible heritage'. Thus the broader framework is provided by the 2001 *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (UDCD)[8]. This call for redressing the imbalances in heritage conservation applies at all levels: local, provincial, national, regional and global. It applies to all peoples of the world. In several countries colonialism and the marketplace have created an understanding of heritage that is not always locally relevant. The focus is often solely on tangible heritage - objects, sites and monuments.

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples sets the minimum standards, calling for the leadership and participation of indigenous peoples in all endeavours through their own First Voice. *UDCD* similarly envisages participatory democracy where the First Voice informs intercultural dialogue. In short the First Voice is the voice



Figure 2
Young novices in the National Museum, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Can we bring the living heritage of Buddhism, collections and places together? Photo. Amareswar Galla



Figure 3
Kapila Vatsyayan, in the centre, is committed to mentoring young people and their voice in heritage conservation. Standing - Amareswar Galla. L to R. Sitting: Gipoulou Helene , Zenovia Pappas, Pilyoung Park, Kim Selling and Payal Joshi at the Hyderabad Workshop of ICOM, February 2008
Photo. M. Krishna Murthy, Salar Jung Museum.

of the bearer of intangible heritage - individual or collective - or those that are the closest as primary stakeholders to a heritage resource, be it intangible or tangible, movable or immovable, natural or cultural. Thus the First Voice has a critical position in our endeavours to safeguard the cultural diversity and intangible heritage in sustainable heritage development.

Rethinking Heritage Conservation

Rabindranath Tagore, the late Indian Nobel Laureate, established the Visva-Bharati University. It is a place for teachers who realise 'that to teach is to learn', and pupils for whom learning is at the confluence of the two streams of the conscious and sub-conscious mind. While the conscious mind is often shaped by formal education, the latter is nurtured through experiential and reflexive learning. In a traditional setting one might feel satisfied by the '*current of influences that come from tradition*' which make it easy to '*unconsciously... imbibe the concentrated wisdom of ages*'. In post-colonial India where the homogenising forces of globalisation are overwhelming the cultural diversity of the country, the challenge is to focus on '*developing the sensitiveness of the soul for affording the mind its true freedom of sympathy*'.[9]

This 'sensitiveness' is critical for building the cross-cultural competencies necessary for understanding the cultural diversity of people and their intangible heritage. In Visva-Bharati, a place of holistic learning, Tagore focussed on the significance of both tangible and intangible heritage within an indigenous environmental philosophy framework that also challenges the colonial binary of nature and culture. Tagore, like so many thinkers from Asia and Africa, was concerned with the devastating impacts of colonial constructions of heritage.

The February 2008 ICOM workshop on Intangible 'Natural' Heritage, organised in Hyderabad and the Araku Valley in India, focused on locating the understanding and practice of safeguarding intangible heritage within the context of sustainable development. The workshop explored how the integration of cultural diversity and bio-diversity could be addressed in museums and heritage agencies through policy, planning and programs in South Asia. One of the central concerns was to understand and work with the young people in heritage conservation.[10]

Part of the agenda for convening this ICOM Workshop was to recognise, in a post-industrial, globalised world environment, that human development must be understood as a process that occurs locally, but also within a total natural and cultural environment. Planning for heritage development has to be much more than a function of economics, social or political change, well-being, human and cultural rights or sustainable physical environments. Rather, it is achieved within, and through, interplay of all these functions. If intangible heritage is the human face of globalisation, then we are wiser following Tagore's emphasis on integrated environmental philosophy.

Such processes for developing a holistic paradigm are inter-related, iterative, and necessarily achieved through collaborative and simultaneous endeavour, and this has been long recognised. They were first comprehensively yet succinctly described in the 2001 UDCD that distilled much of the earlier thinking. The UDCD came into being in a post-September 11 world - its significance was at the same time displaced (in the environment of global shock that then existed) as well as reinforced, by demonstrating the compelling need for an articulate and rational vision for global collective action and shared values, rather than reactive violence and oppositional politics.

The UDCD calls for a new understanding and celebration of the value of human difference as opposed to homogeneity. It is designed to protect and enhance the international intellectual, economic, spiritual and moral value of cultural diversity. It affirms this diversity as the vital resource to protect cultural rights, biodiversity, individual self-value, social harmony, cross-cultural communication and to 'humanise globalisation.' It was apt that this document was launched with a detailed Action Plan during the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. Its spirit was embodied in the eloquent way that Arjun Appadurai called for integrated and holistic thinking in dealing with cultural diversity, tangible and intangible heritage and sustainable development.[11]

This philosophical thinking led to one of the key outcomes of the Summit, bringing to fruition a long struggle by many heritage action protagonists, that culture needs to be recognised as the fourth pillar of sustainable development, along with economy, education and environment. As an international policy framework, the UDCD can be adapted to national and international purposes to help transform civil society. It has the potential to improve community harmony, our relationship with the environment and the way we develop economies through a new understanding of the physical and human world.

Thinking in Africa before the Johannesburg Summit and the UDCD was echoed by the then ICOM President, Alpha Oumar Konare, in 1991, speaking about Africa when he used the words 'Kill the museum', in referring to the perceived need to disengage from the colonial paradigm of the museum and to further the future of new kinds of museums in post-colonial Africa.[12] This transformative imperative and spirit informed the reconstruction and development program of museums, heritage agencies and national parks in democratic South Africa.[13] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission brought heritage and identity construction alive in a *'civil society bursting with energy about dealing with the past.'*[14] The Arts and Culture Task Group that reviewed the legacies of colonial and apartheid museum and heritage practices, mapped out a comprehensive framework for change. They advocated that the practice of authorising as foremost, the tangible heritage of European origins with a bias towards middle and upper class, metropolitan and male interests, which supported the legitimacy of a hegemonic western discourse and its apartheid manifestations in South Africa, be discarded.[15]

The intangible living heritage, *amasiko/ditso*, an African concept of heritage conservation in South Africa, is central to the rethinking. The location of intangible heritage as living and dynamic in post-colonial museology and historiography, the limitations of museographical tools for its documentation and interpretation, and the ability to retain the integrity of the First Voice of the primary carriers of intangible heritage are being critiqued.[16] The focus is on the centrality of what we now term the First Voice in the development of a museological discourse grounded in the African context and the African Renaissance movement, and in the rethinking of the museum as a post-colonial cultural centre where *'the tangible can only be understood and interpreted through the intangible'*.[17]

When launching the Robben Island Museum in 1997, Nelson Mandela commented that South Africa's museums and monuments had reflected the experiences and political ideals of a minority to the exclusion of others during colonialism and the apartheid era, and that this was also *'a vital part of South Africa's collective heritage. Siqithini - the Island, a place of pain and banishment for centuries and now of triumph - presents us with the rich challenge of heritage.'*[18] Interpretation through the memories and First Voice of former prisoners and warders on Robben Island provides an intangible heritage context which is used to interpret the tangible places, landscapes, structures and other material culture as well as the environmental hinterland. Similarly, the development of the District Six Museum in Cape Town as a 'Place of Resistance and Triumph Over Apartheid' was

curated through the voices of the very people that the official scripts failed to erase from the record.[19] The Museum was founded with the commitment that *'Never Again Must People Be Forcibly Removed'*. It aims to ensure that the history and memory of forced removals in South Africa endures, and in the process that it challenges all forms of social oppression. The museum is conceived as a house of memory, as a landscape of struggle and temple for the First Voice.

In welcoming the *Art contre Apartheid/Art against Apartheid* collection to its final destination at the Parliament House in Cape Town in 1996, Nelson Mandela wrote that the works:

> *range across the scale of human emotion, from anger to zeal to love and sorrow. Such works demand the viewer's attention, they challenge our beliefs and values, they remind us of past errors but they also speak of hope for the future.*[20]

In this context museums in South Africa take on a critical role, and the government's position is clear in stating that '*museums are key sites for the formation and expression of knowledge and cultural identity. South African museums will be restructured so that they reflect in every way the collective heritage, the new identity, and the ethos of a multicultural, democratic South Africa*'. Locating the multiple voices of people in museums and heritage institutions has become the central concern.

Indigenous curators from Pacific Island countries and Australia have provided critical leadership in arguing that the ICOM definition of the museum continues to be object-centred, and that the understanding of the museum needs to be liberated in order to encompass the idea of a genuinely inclusive cultural centre that facilitates the continuity of living heritage.[21] Ralph Regenvanu, who championed the location of the First Voice in the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and National Museum, brought his expertise to the drafting of the 2002 Shanghai Charter and the 2003 UNESCO Convention on Intangible Heritage, commented:

> *The Pacific Islands are made up of over twenty states and territories in an area covering over half of the world's surface. The Pacific Islands region has the highest rate of indigenous people within the national population of any region of the world, and also the highest rate of customary land ownership. The Melanesian region... has a combined population of less than 10 million people but hosts one-fifth of the world's languages. There are two characteristics of our cultures: they are contemporary societies that demonstrate a high level of cultural continuity with previous generations; and the tangible elements of the culture are but a small sub-set of the intangible elements, which are all-encompassing.*[22]

In Australia, the national affirmative action program for the participation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in Australian heritage institutions (1985-1992), was facilitated from the position that *all* heritage is intangible and that it is illustrated through tangible heritage, the interpretation of which through the contemporary gaze, must give primacy to the First Voice of the primary stakeholders.[23] In 1991 during what is



Figure 4
Relaunching ICOM South Africa in May 2007 at the Cradle of Humanity World Heritage Area, Jatti Bredekamp speaking passionately about the importance of locating First Voice in post colonial African museums. Photo. Amareswar Galla

considered one of the largest meetings of Aboriginal elders on the banks of the Crocodile Hole in the Kimberley, it was eloquently argued that 'culture is a map written in the land' and that it is read through the cumulative memory and knowledge of elders.[24] This wisdom was carried forward by the Aboriginal Interests Task Force in Western Australian heritage development, leaving an indelible and lasting transformative direction for Australian museums.[25]

The holistic approach to heritage conservation, first drawn in sand at the Crocodile Hole meeting, also had a seminal effect on the outcomes of the Nara Conference on Authenticity in Japan in 1994.[26] The 1972 World Heritage Convention was derived from a European and Western concern with protection of tangible cultural and natural heritage. The Nara meeting challenged this position, and for the first time introduced the significance of intangible heritage into the operation of the Convention. Henry Cleere, one of the most knowledgeable experts on the World Heritage Convention, argues that the instrument reflects the concern and spirit of the post war reconstruction efforts and the rapid progress with developmental projects at the time.[27] In the preamble to the Convention, the concern is universalised from the European specific context to all parts of the world. This is in many ways similar to the Hague Convention of 1954, which was drafted following the unprecedented destruction of cultural property during the Second World War. The universalised paradigm of 'development' informed largely by the success of the Marshall Plan and the resulting sensibility about poverty alleviation, was extended internationally. As Escobar argues:

> *Everything that was important in the social and economic life of these countries (their population, processes of capital accumulation, natural resources, agriculture and trade, administration, cultural voices, etc.) became the object of explicit calculation by experts in new sciences developed for that purpose, and the subject of interventions designed by a vast array of newly formed institutions. In a few years, this unprecedented strategy extended its reach to all aspects of the social body.*[28]

This very widely adopted post-World War II development framework also informed international cultural institutions. In contrast with this, the ethnography of resistance and 'alternative heritage' movements from scholars of the 'South', working in close partnership with their colleagues in the North, is an on-going engagement in rethinking the museum and all other heritage tools institutionalised in the post war context. Konare's intervention in Africa, the Crocodile Hole meeting, the 1994 Nara Conference, the ICOM 2002 Shanghai Charter and ICOM 2004 Declaration in Seoul have all been significant turning points in providing leadership for progressing this move towards inclusive heritage development.

Understanding heritage from the contextual standpoint and locating the First Voice requires integrated approaches to both the tangible and intangible resources as illustrated in the following diagram.[29]

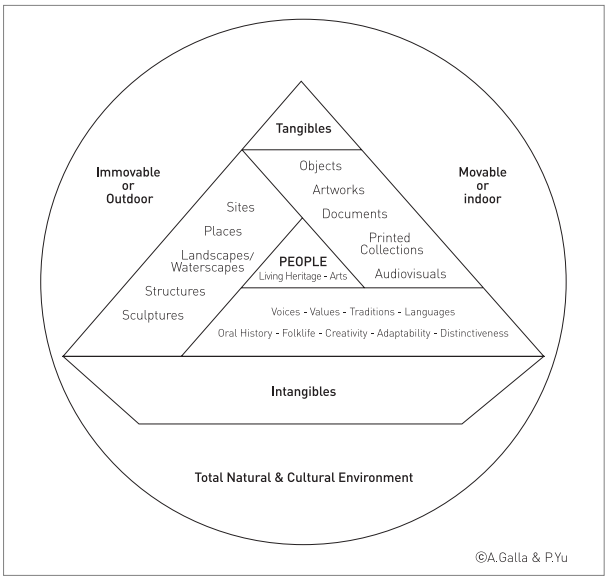


Table1
Holistic Representation of Cultural and Heritage Resources

Embedding the First Voice

Conceptual frameworks for understanding and working with the First Voice could vary in each cultural context. The underlying principles of integrity, authority and authenticity remain good indicators for assessing the way we work. While intercultural dialogue is a means to interrogating cultural diversity concerns, it is critical that the First Voice of women and the participation of young people inform all forms of change. The transformation of heritage practice can be achieved through demonstration projects where the goal is to rethink the heritage paradigm to establish holistic approaches to the conservation of heritage values at a local level.





Figure 5
Ms Nguyen Thi Tuyet, Director, National Museum of Women, Hanoi, Vietnam, argues in the ICOM Vientiane, Laos, workshop (August 2006) for gender balance in reclaiming First Voice. Photo. Amareswar Galla

Figure 6
Elsie Sheppard emphasises the centrality of the First Voice of rural women in running the Pioneer Women's Hut museum, Glenroy, NSW, in the Snowy Mountains of Australia. Photo. Amareswar Galla

One of the most impressive demonstration projects, bringing tangible and intangible heritage together through the First Voice, that I have come across in recent years is at the Cobb & Co Museum, a campus of the Queensland Museum in Toowoomba, Australia.[30] The Museum's Director, Deborah Tranter, mentions that regional museums in Australia like hers were often the 'last stop before the dump'. In transforming this situation and making her museum into a family and community-centred institution of excellence, she also embarked on another great venture - that of building the National Carriage Factory.

The Cobb & Co Museum is concerned that so many of the skills and the associated tangible and intangible knowledge behind the construction of built environment and the making of collections is being lost, if not already lost. In addition to preserving the tangible heritage, the museum has launched an innovative project to establish a training centre for 'heritage trades' focussing on the understanding and continuation of the knowledge system for productive ends. This includes training for preserving the heritage trades but also its use in the conservation and maintenance of collections.

This project points to the irony, that at a time when the heritage industry is *'growing rapidly there is a dramatic decline in the trades, crafts and skills needed to maintain and preserve our heritage products and services'*. Major-General Peter Arnison, Chairman of the Queensland Museum Foundation, affirms his commitment that the Factory project *'will provide a meeting place for the tradesmen of yesteryear to pass over the baton of their knowledge and experience to the next generation; and we will forever actively foster the preservation of our heritage trades'*.[31]

To the surprise of many people, the project has been able to generate revenue, mostly from donations and private sector, to realise this intangible heritage initiative. The most important lesson to learn from this project is that if you enagage with your local community in a relevant enterprise that brings both cultural value and economic value together, then you can end up with strong community donor support, both in-kind and cash. The ownership of the primary stakeholders is critical to safeguard intangible heritage and to do so through the First Voice of the carriers of that knowledge system.

An exemplary cultural institution that embodies the notion of the First Voice is the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and National Museum.[32] Ralph Regenvanu, Director of the Vanuatu National Cultural Council, recently said that given the 'practise and bearing of Intangible Cultural and Natural Heritage on our daily lives' museums could be critical places. He further said that museums need to learn to engage with people where 'the custodian value system is living'. One of the unique institutions in Vanuatu is the networks of men and women field workers which work in parallel with the Cultural Centre. They form a national team transcending their own cultural boundaries. They are set up to work with traditional leaders to make sure that their 'Kastom' lives on. Or in Bislama *'blong mek sua se Kastom I save laev go kasem fiuja'*.

The traditional practice of taping, documentation and photography are on the sideline as supportive tools to the actual First Voice of people annually articulated through the field workers coming together at the Cultural Centre to share and learn and above all keep the First Voice informing the very essence of the Centre as a place for presenting the sense of self of the people in Vanuatu. In the words of Kirk Hoffman, a former director of the National Museum, it is a '*living museum with living arms and legs, fingers and toes organically linking the institution with the islanders across Vanuatu. It is a mechanism for continuity of the intangible heritage that is expressed in the national language, Bislama*.' The modality of the field workers system is now being adapted by the Kanaki in New Caledonia in partnership with the Centre Culturel Tjibaou and also in the Solomon Islands through the National Museum. One of the keynote speakers at the ICOM 2004 General Conference in Seoul, Nobel Laureate Jose Ramos Horta, was keen to emphasise that the Vanuatu field workers' network system is the most relevant tool to assist the continuity of intangible heritage in his country Timor Leste at the village level with Uma Fukun, the National Museum as the hub.

For a different kind of illustration I would like to draw on a comparison between the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, the Netherlands and the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, Hanoi. Both are witnesses to the transformation of museological discourse of the past decade and are concerned with 'relevance' in all its multiplicity of interpretations. Their principal concern is mapping relevance to their multiple stakeholder community groups, assessing the historical and contemporary layers of significance embedded in the collections, and providing meaningful experiences for multiple publics.

The challenges of addressing the concerns of minority groups have become central in both Europe and Asia and the two museums address this in different ways. Relationship building between collections and their source communities has paved the way for working in new and innovative ways for the Leiden museum, within the nation state and beyond, and often across geo-political regions and the world. It, like many 'museums of world cultures', has become popular contributing to new formations in European museum development. They endeavour to become windows of opportunity for transformative learning for promoting cultural pluralism for people of all generations irrespective of their culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Leiden museum is focussed on the transformation of a conventional museum established in the 19th Century. The principal driver for change is a corporate leadership that wants to make the museum and its collections relevant in the 21st Century. In the first phase of re-development the museum tried to bring together the collections derived from Dutch colonial history and their source communities across the world. In the second phase, the significance of the collections to the living heritage and voice of immigrant populations from the former colonies, is being explored through a series of demonstration projects. This is a triangulation between the collections, source communities and immigrant groups with a stake in the museum. The First Voice here is dealt with reference to the source communities but the engagement with the immigrant groups continues to be a challenge.

The Hanoi museum illustrates a new concept in museum development in the world. The starting point is the present day material culture and intangible heritage of Vietnam's fifty-four ethnic groups. The museum establishes, through research and stakeholder community participation, the contemporary cultural profile of groups and then illustrates their location in the dynamic history of Vietnam. It has become a facilitator of community-based heritage conservation among minority groups such as the Hmong. For example photo voice is used as a technique in an exemplary exhibition focussing on the Hmong through their own eyes to bring the First Voice of minority groups into the museum.[33]

The First Voice in World Heritage Areas

The globalising tendency of World Heritage inscriptions has come under scrutiny in the past decade. The concern is that the processes of nomination and assessment and the pool of expertise, mostly derived from western countries, is resulting in a homogenising negative impact in Asia and Africa. The conservation plans, which are repetitive and standardised, rarely engage with local communities or their living heritage. Some of the projects addressing these concerns are considered briefly here.[34] It is notable however, that these

inscriptions were based on limited outsider perceptions of what the local communities consider either natural or cultural values of significance to them as primary stakeholders.[35] Moreover, while the focus was on that which was perceived as heritage from the outside, local intangible heritage was ignored until collaborative corrective action was initiated by local authorities in partnership with UNESCO offices.

The developmental action plans are facilitated through systematic integrated local area planning with the primary stakeholder voice being articulated using community museology or ecomuseology methodologies. It is understood that integrated local area planning is where a community grounded approach is used to plan for an integration of resourcing, service design and delivery, within a distinct locality delineated physically in settlement terms, as well as by a community of interest. It can include planning for single issues or programs at the local level or across agencies and their programs. It can be integrated with physical planning or it can focus on social planning or cultural planning issues alone. Local area planning can be addressed across larger areas, such as local government authorities or districts, by combining a series of local area plans into one planning project.

The planning approaches taken involve full participation by the local community, drawing on local skills and expertise, and providing for empowerment of the local community through the plan's development and implementation. In developing a community based plan the opportunities to include strategies that empower local communities are prioritised, making them better able to provide for their own needs. The goal is to contribute to more effective community building, by strengthening local capacity for action. The empowerment model for local planning used in these initiatives:

- recognises that local people are well placed to know what they need
- recognises that values and priorities vary from place to place
- strategically places resources to maximise access by local people
- gives local people resources to meet their own needs
- gives control over resources to local communities
- develops the management skills of the local community.

The first case study deals with Ha Long Bay in Quang Ninh province located in the northeast corner of Vietnam. It is an area of superlative natural beauty, and is also a treasure house of unusual, and often unique, geomorphic features, ecosystems and bio-diversity. There are many sites of historical significance and archaeological remains in and around the Bay. It is also strongly represented in the myths and legends of the Vietnamese people. The natural features and the enormously complicated interaction between them and the climatic, hydrological and human influences upon them are, as yet, little researched and therefore largely unexplained. Ha Long Bay is a unique cluster of landscapes and waterscapes formed when rivers and valleys were overtaken by rising sea levels at the end of the Pleistocene or last Ice Age and during the current Holocene or Warm Period. There is material evidence of human cultures during these transitional periods of climatic history.

The Vietnamese government made Ha Long Bay a National Protected Area in 1962. It has twice been inscribed on the World Heritage List by UNESCO: in 1994 for its outstanding landscape and aesthetic characteristics, and then again in 2000 for its scientific and geological values. However, in the process of inscription the local people were neither involved nor consulted, and there was no acknowledgement of their intangible heritage. The corrective cultural action taken by the Vietnamese has been to bring together the heritage resources of the area and all the stakeholder groups into a participatory framework that is facilitated by the Ha Long Ecomuseum development. The partnership builds on the aims, interests and values that inform interpretations of community, local history and holistic environmental values, especially the intangible heritage values. The transformation in heritage practice is achieved through a series of demonstration projects focussing on intangible heritage resources identified by the local people as part of the integrated local area plan for the World Heritage Area.

One of the projects in the heart of the World Heritage Area is the Cua Van Floating Cultural Centre. Prior to the Ecomuseum development there were proposals to sedentarise the fishing communities on land. However, a detailed mapping of the heritage values of the fishing communities revealed significant intangible heritage that

not only has local significance, but also reveals a more inclusive understanding of the World Heritage Area. This living heritage of the people is now interpreted through their own First Voice with the construction and opening of the Cua Van Floating Cultural Centre and Museum in the World Heritage Area on the 18th and 19th of May 2006, as part of International Museum Day celebrations. It documents and interprets the intangible heritage values of fishing communities that live on the Bay, firstly for the local people and then for outside visitors. The curators, educators and interpreters are the local Cua Van people. The project is also critical for intergenerational transmission of local knowledge systems. While the older generation facilitated the establishment of the project, when it came to employment in the Centre they designated members of the next generation to carry the baton, while they as older community members would continue to mentor them.

A different case study is the Hoi An Ancient Town located at the mouth of the Thu Bon River in Quang Nam Province, Central Vietnam.[36] It was inscribed on the World Heritage List in December 1999, as a special example of a fully preserved traditional trading port in South East Asia. It is classified as a 'group of buildings' under Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Dating back to the 2nd century BC, Hoi An was an important port until the end of the nineteenth century. It was a significant centre of mercantile and cultural exchange throughout Vietnamese history. Its economic stagnation, following the development of larger ports in the twentieth century, accounts for its remarkable preservation. The street plan of the Ancient Town developed organically in response to economic and social influences. It contains a diverse range of shops, houses, communal houses, religious monuments and buildings and an open market. Most date from the nineteenth century, although many have older features dating to the seventeenth century, and are constructed predominantly of wood.

The principal threats to the Hoi An World Heritage Area come from its susceptibility to flooding, encroaching urbanisation, inappropriate tourism development and the possibility of residents seeking to capitalise on the increased value of their houses by selling them to tourism service organisations wishing to gain a foothold in Hoi An. The town was already a notable tourist attraction, but the number of visitors is increasing rapidly following its inscription on the World Heritage List.

The intangible heritage of the area is now under serious threat, given that the initial focus following



Figure 7
The Tonle Sap is the largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia. It is adjacent to Angkor Wat in Cambodia. The voice and intangible heritage of the people who live on it is yet to be understood. A partnership with the Cua Van project is being envisaged. Photo. Amareswar Galla

inscription was on the built environment. The transformative corrective action taken is to rethink the site-centred conservation around the Ancient Town. The Ancient Town and the neighbouring villages were brought together into one integrated local area plan. This includes the surrounding countryside that has been organically linked to the development of the ancient port. In order to demonstrate the living heritage of the Hoi An District and the continuity of local heritage values, several houses that have been conserved have been adapted for re-use as museums.

The museum dedicated to an understanding of intangible heritage is the Hoi An Folklore Museum that opened in April 2005. It presents the intangible heritage of the villages and the Ancient Town as an integral part of the total heritage of Hoi An. It is linked to the surrounding villages, especially Thanh Ha Ceramic Village; Kim Bong Woodcraft Village; Tra Que Horticultural Village; Bay Mau Coco-pals in Cam Thanh Commune; and Vong Nhi Fishing Village. The artisans from these villages worked on the interpretation plan, collections and exhibits. It is significant to note that the conservation and restoration work in Hoi An is carried out using the trade skills of the Thanh Ha and Kim Bong villages. Visitors can now have a first hand understanding of their trade skills and lifestyles through the museum which has developed emphasising the First Voice of the trades' people and their community groups.

My third case study is the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR). It was inscribed on the World Heritage List in December 1999 as an outstanding example of the influence of an innovative transportation system on the social and economic development of a multicultural region. It also served as a model for similar mountain railway developments in other parts of the world. It is further stated that the development of railways in the nineteenth century had a profound influence on social and economic developments in many parts of the world.

The DHR illustrates this in an exceptional and seminal fashion. The DHR is the first, and still the most outstanding, example of a hill passenger railway. Opened in 1881, it applied bold and ingenious engineering solutions to the problem of establishing an effective rail link across a mountainous terrain of great beauty. It is still fully operational and retains most of its original features intact. DHR is world famous for the sounds, smells and romance of a by-gone era. This is a hundred year old 'toy train' hauled by tiny 4-wheel locomotives labouring uphill at thirteen kilometres per hour, crisscrossing roads, going past rural settlements and bazaars in curves, loops, "Z's"and steep gradients for its eighty eight kilometre journey over the spectacular Himalayan landscape. For most of its length, it is a roadside tramway and its stations and buildings are easily accessible to the general public. DHR's evolution is significant both economically and in engineering terms. Numerous heritage steam railways are operating successfully in other countries and benefit their neighbouring communities.

The most significant step in the conservation of the DHR was a primary stakeholder workshop that brought together local people and workers on the Railway for the first time. In fact, the participants were surprised that the DHR, around which their lives had been built for more than a century, was inscribed on the World Heritage List. Their grandparents had built and maintained the infrastructure. There is substantial knowledge in the form of intangible heritage that is yet to be thoroughly documented and interpreted. It is only now that the voices of the local people and their family heritage are gradually informing the conversion of old railway stations into museums along the line. The intangible heritage of the 'sounds, smells and romance of a by-gone era' as well as the labour history of local people, are interpreted at museums in Ghoom, Sukna, Darjeeling and Kurseong. The intangible heritage of the famous Darjeeling tea and the deep Buddhist traditions of the local area have hardly been understood. Contextualising Darjeeling heritage through the local people is urgently needed before the 'Incredible India' campaigns and the rapid increase in visitation drown the First Voice of the local people.

Heritage Conservation - Models of Engagement

The above case studies demand changes in the way we approach museum and heritage management in general and intangible heritage in particular. This is a small sample and I am sure that there are many more excellent projects that readers will be familiar with both at work and in their personal lives. The following models of interaction in community engagement provide an overview

of the transformations that are needed. Model I is the most familiar for most people. It is a one way street with very limited engagement with the voices of people. Model II is becoming popular and there are many show and tell presentations which enable us to scope the possibilities. However, Model III is the most inclusive and challenging as it requires a mind shift in the way heritage conservation is conceptualised, understood and practiced.[37]

Project Concern	Model I Participation as Consultation	Model II - Participation as Strategic Partnership	Model III - Participation as Community Cultural Action
Who initiates the project?	Usually external researcher / specialist	Community specialist or the external researcher/specialist	Community cultural specialist/elders /curators /activists
What is the extent of community participation?	Community members or groups are informants	Community members or groups are co-workers in project development & outcomes	Community cultural control & development
What is the extent of community involvement?	Usually terminates upon the professional receiving the requisite amount of information. Characterised by limitation to the initial involvement stage	Community involvement is on-going from planning, through implementation and evaluation stages. Assumes a role for the community in joint decision making.	Community control leads to on-going community cultural leadership and cultural reclamation
Where is the location of expertise?	Expertise resides with the external agency which is empowered with the knowledge.	Expertise resides with both the professional and the community ⇨ mutual empowerment.	Expertise is part of shared community cultural heritage and values.
What is the nature of information flow and heritage communication?	One way from the community to the external professional	Al l participants generate information and contribute to joint project development; information flow is between and among all participants	Community grounded information from generation to generation with strengthening cultural self-esteem, continuity of culture and heritage
Is the process empowering?	Community is disempowered	Community is empowered to participate in the mainstream	Community is able to continue in the mainstream through self-empowerment.
Intangible Heritage	First Voice is marginalised or even silenced	Space for articulating First Voice	First Voice is the driver

Table2
Models of Engagement

The Way Forward

It has been argued that a critical reflection on museological and heritage practices over recent decades demonstrates that museums and heritage agencies are yet to develop their capacity to address intangible heritage as an integral part of their core business.[38] The 'Masterpieces of Intangible Heritage' approach of UNESCO has enabled a positioning for validation in the North-South dialogue to balance safeguarding tangible and intangible heritage with respect for the cultural diversity of humanity. Beyond this important and in many ways symbolic recognition, lies the real test for a paradigm shift, when local communities are able to have their voices heard when institutions break out of the object-centred and site/place-centred conceptual straightjackets and ensure that cultural continuity is informed by both tangible and intangible heritage.[39]

In the 2008 Hyderabad-Araku Valley Conference, the opening keynote speaker Dr Kapila Vatsyayan, a doyen of Indian scholars on intangible heritage, challenged us to consider whether or not the transcription of intangible heritage through documentation freezes living systems into a time warp. This is the very reason why the Vanuatu Cultural Centre developed the paradigm of the field workers network to ensure the continuity of the living heritage systems. While reducing living heritage to documentary heritage could defeat the very purpose of safeguarding intangible heritage, documentation tools need to be appropriately developed as supporting mechanisms to respect and honour the First Voice of the peoples, as demonstrated by the Vanuatu Cultural Centre.

It is clearly stated in the Preamble of the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Heritage that '*the intangible heritage is fundamentally safeguarded through the continued creativity of and enactment by agents of the communities that produce, maintain and transform it*'. In dealing with the past and in the management of heritage resources we continually interpret and re-interpret objects, values and ideas from contemporary perspectives. The integration and centrality of the First Voice, that of the primary carriers of intangible heritage in heritage conservation, is therefore the most pressing engagement for all stakeholders and for the future of our collective past.

NOTES

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3. The use of First Voice as a tool has been advocated by quite a number of people and groups in the past two decades. Within the heritage sector notable have been Gerald McMaster, Lee-Ann Martin, Gloria Cranmer Wester, W. Rick West, Michael M. Ames, George F. McDonald, Fiona Foley and Amareswar Galla. The concept was the main tool used for the workshops in Victoria British Columbia, Canada, in 1994 as part of the International Year of Worlds Indigenous Peoples. Several of the papers from the workshop are published in, *Curatorship: Indigenous Perspectives in Post-Colonial Societies*, Mercury Series, Published by the Canadian Museum of Civilization in partnership with the Commonwealth Association of Museums and the University of Victoria, BC, 1996. Other early uses of the term and concept include: the San Francisco-based Asian-American performance group FirstVoice http://www.firstvoice.org founded in 1995, and First Voice International http://www.firstvoiceint.org , the international charity which first came to prominence with its launch of the Pan-African satellite-based Africa Learning Channel in 1999 (followed by a parallel initiative for Asia in 2004). Rosemary Joyce is a powerful advocate for the use of the term in the communication of archaeological knowledge and discoveries from the perspective of what is revealed about long-dead peoples, see her 'Introducing the First Voice' in Joyce, R. 2002. *The Language of Archaeology: Dialogue, Narrative and Writing.* (London: Blackwell). The term is also being increasingly used in wider contexts on behalf of other groups that are seen as being ignored or undervalued, as with the West London charity First Voice, which provides an advocacy service and centre for vulnerable elderly in community care (http://www.firstvoice.org.uk, while somewhat similarly the UK's Federation of Small Businesses now terms itself (and its magazine) the First Voice, as the advocate and public face of the country's 210,000 small and medium businesses that believe they have no voice within the main political and business arena dominated by major corporations.
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Main Papers

The Girinya Dance Theatre of the Tiv People of Nigeria: an Aesthetic Evaluation

Jacob Manase Agaku

The Girinya Dance Theatre of the Tiv People of Nigeria: an Aesthetic Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

'Residual theatre' is used to refer to mean ritual performances that are still enacted but which have lost their original purpose. Such performances can still be enjoyed and can still play a role in promoting social cohesion and a sense of identity, so long as the performers, and the audience, recognise and accept the way they have changed. The *Girinya* dance of the *Tiv* people of Nigeria, which was originally a war dance, is a case in point. In the *Tiv* dance aesthetic, men's dances should be vigorous and energetic, as the *Girinya* dance is, but whereas in the past the dance was about the way warriors should behave in battle, it is now about continuity and renewal. I have tried to describe and evaluate this aesthetic and the way it has been adapted to have a new meaning within the changing culture of the *Tiv* people.

Introduction

Recently, issues about the continued relevance of traditional theatre in the 21st century have dominated discourse within academia[1]. The rationale behind this discourse might be inferred from the imbalance, which exists between the west and the developing world. This imbalance can be seen in the highly technological hegemony of the west and the fledgling under-development of the developing countries. The technological revolution in the west has gradually reduced communication to a 'one-touch-button' system in which people prefer to stay at home and watch television or movies than go out to a theatre to watch a live performance. This is adversely affecting the theatre performance as an immediate, dialogic process.

Against this background, how can the Tiv theatre, as a residual event, remain relevant and compete with the ever-changing society of computers, Internet, website and democratic governance? A residual theatre is not a 'dead' theatre but a theatre that has lost its original values and is adopting new ones as the social

environment undergoes change. The residual theatre might not be able to compete favourably in the western scientific sense, but will still have relevance and can continue to contribute to social harmony. This social harmony can be achieved on the level of the aesthetic.

Aesthetics does not simply imply beauty or ugliness. It captures the totality of a people's world-view; religious, social and even political relationships. These develop the aesthetic temperament. This temperament in turn develops the perception and receptivity to change; including technological change. How change is perceived and received will affect and determine the uses to which that change is put.

The *Girinya* performance, as it is practiced today, has undergone a great deal of change. The change has been on the level of religion (the advent of colonialism and Christianity), representative governance and social perception of success (now material and monetary recognition rather than strength and prowess). This has affected the use of emblems such as *imborivungu*, human head and other paraphernalia associated with warrior-hood and the social construct of success. This has greatly reduced the use of *Girinya* for the sharpening of skills and religious renewal and fortification for war. Today it is little more than a dance. Thus, it has acquired a new dance aesthetic that stresses strength, vitality, style and order.

Hagher submits that: In *Tiv* dance aesthetic, men's dance should be full of energy Nimbleness of feet, endurance and speed.[2]

The aesthetic idiom of the *Girinya* dance is expressed in the above. In addition, the dance is seen to be enhanced and made meaningful to the *Tse-mker-Tiv* people and is appreciated:

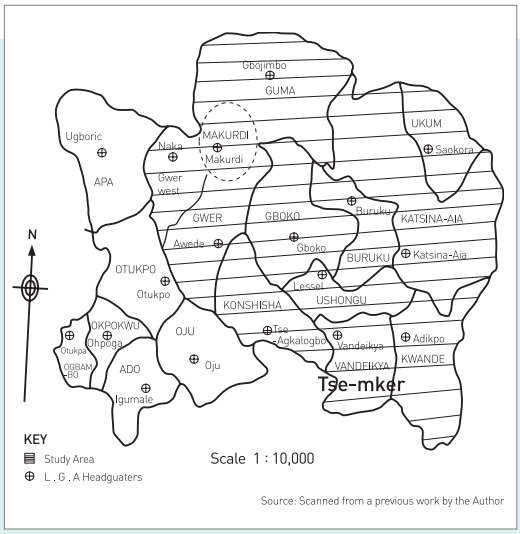


Figure 1
Map of Benue State showing the areas studied

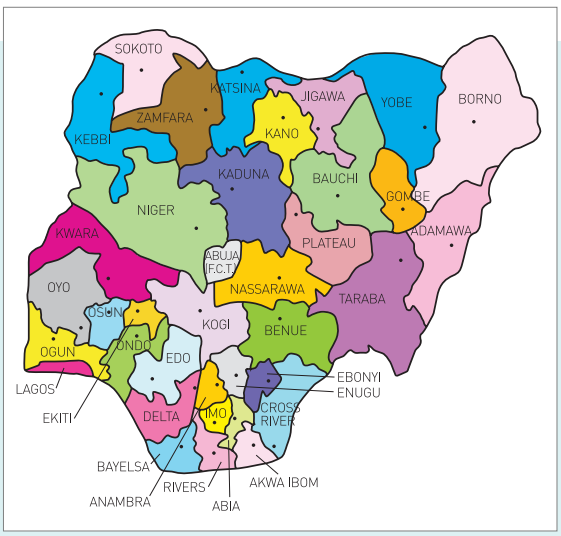


Figure 2
Niger-Congo language speaking areas

If he dances Sha Agee with a lot of force, and with harmony, vough vough. The man should hold up his head tall and proudly, sha iceen failure to observe these consideration results in bad dancing, without harmony, speed or pride, described by Tiv as dang dang[3].

This forms the philosophical assumption underlying the aesthetic evaluation of the *Girinya* performance, as residual theatre and will form the basis of the evaluation later in the work. For now, who are the Tiv people?

The Tiv People

The Tiv social system did not rely on a centralised system of authority. That is, unlike the Hausa or the Yoruba who had Emirs and Obas, lording it over them, the Tiv never had a king over all Tivland. Rather, leadership starts from the family unit through the *Or ya* (head of the family) and his kinsmen and relates mostly on this level. The Tiv understanding of authority and power arises from a view of leadership that is amenable to the imposition of either elected or appointed chiefs. This explains why the Tiv had no chiefs who ruled over the whole land. It is the coming of the colonialists that brought with it the chieftaincy institution in Tivland.

In the Tiv notion of leadership therefore, authority resides only in the personality of the leader (family head). The family head gets his authority, not by appointment, but by his understanding, usage of *tsav* (witchcraft potential)[4] and how much *Akombo* (medicine or charms) he possessed. This authority however, is valid only for those who are organically bound through their kinship to the possessor of the authority. Thus, a man could be a chief only over an area or a people he belongs to.[5]

In the Tiv social system also, kinship is designated in terms of *Tar* (land or world). The *tar* could also be patrilineal segments of origin known as *ipaven* (division or segment), made-up of compound units headed by the *Or ya*. The *tar* therefore is a place, but essentially a 'peopled' place[6]. This is why when a Tiv man is asked where his *tar* is, he replies in terms of the lineage segment occupying the area. From the perspective of kinship, *tar* Tiv would then connote the believed common lineage of all Tiv people as coming from one father, called Tiv.

The *tar* therefore is a place, but essentially it carries with it the designation of lineage. The designations and the importance attached to *tar* in the Tiv world-view shows the intimacy of the union of the earth and the people. Observing this union of man and nature, Eugene Rubingh writes that, in Tiv society,

Genealogy was definitive for man's location in the tar, for his understanding of authority, for marriage and family. It located him in the group where he could find security as he became part of the whole and submerged himself within it.[7]

This relationship between man and nature (tar) is so strong that it is commonplace to hear a person being asked his *nongo* (group or lineage). Vambe Agaku[8] insists that, it is necessary to know your *kpen tar* (part of land) and your *nongo* within the *tar*. According to him, this serves for identification anywhere. He maintained that, for proper placement within the *nongo*, an individual has to know the names of his ancestors (grand and great-grand parents). And being a patrilineal society, the individual, asked about his nongo or tar, answers in terms of ancestral cleavages; his *ityo*. The *ityo* designates the father's 'home' and the smaller segments that make up the *ityo*. The Tiv regard the *ityo* as a powerful entity, capable of protecting its sons and daughters. But it is also said that, when one is not at peace with his *ityo*, he could run to his *igba* (his mother's people) for protection.[9] Thus, the *ityo* and *igba* are embodiments of much more than just lineage groupings, but carry with them spiritual significance and power. This relationship forms the thesis of this dissertation.

One other important aspect of the Tiv social system is the marriage by barter or exchange marriage, known as *yamshe*. The *yamshe* is a system of marriage in which the male of a family would give his sister to the brother of his intended wife and receive his desired wife in return. This exchange made it possible for the giving family and the receiving family not to feel the 'loss' of a daughter because it was as if faces merely changed.[10]

Again, Vambe Agaku observes that, the *yamshe* was very good and important to the Tiv people because family relationships were strengthened and it made the society closer to itself.[11] This system of marriage was also seen to discourage divorce and ensured that no married daughter was maltreated; because the other family might do the same to one's sister or daughter.

Within the Tiv social system also, it was permissible for a brother to take over his brother's wife in the event of death. According to Apine Agaku, this takeover was meant to ensure a family's continuity; that is, men to carry the family's name. Another reason was to avoid leaving a young woman to suffer a husband's death. In other words,

this served to give her a place and a sense of responsibility.

With the coming of the missionaries and colonial administrators to Tivland, the people were made to abandon the *yamshe* marriage system in favour of the *Kem* marriage system. This was achieved in 1927.[12] The *Kem* marriage system is a cumulative bride-wealth system, which begins with small gifts to the intended bride's parents and concludes with gifts from the bridegroom to his in-laws at the birth of each child. Vambe Agaku says that the *Kem* system was not practiced uniformly in Tivland. He says, for example that, amongst the Tse-Mker people,

> *As I know, you start giving gifts to your in-laws and during such visits, you are expected to help out on the farm. When the in-laws are satisfied that you are worth their daughter, you then pay the dowry. It is not fixed and you don't pay anything at the birth of each child.*[13]

He goes further to say that; this system of marriage encouraged the pursuit of mere material wealth and the accumulation of wives out of greed. It also encouraged divorce. Since no daughter of a (monetarily) rich family would be held to ransom for a maltreated wife, husbands became unruly and insatiable. Consequently, the *tar* was said to have become spoilt (*tar vihi*) and the hitherto carefully maintained balance of the community's social structure collapsed.

The marriage institution in Tivland was that of the search for prestige rather than mere wealth. That is, it was a thing of pride to have a large family and be able to feed that family,[14] also, it was a thing of pride to have many children (male) who would look after and defend the family's land and name. The *yamshe* then afforded a person with a large number of *angol* (marriageable sisters) to have great marriage potential and a large farm; an overflowing barn and people to tend it. But the *Kem* system forced a person to sell his farm produce to get money for the gifts and the dowry.

However, the Tiv social system is structured in harmony with the environment, as evidenced in the Tiv belief in the symbiosis of man, his society and the natural world around him. This attachment made the Tiv cautious about change. The motivation for cultural life amongst the Tiv came from the past rather than from the open challenge of the present.[15] The Tiv like change; but only change that would fit into their general pattern of life. This cautious attitude made writers and other anthropologists characterise the Tiv as 'backward'.[16]

However, behind this seeming 'backwardness' lies a profound theory about the structure of the universe; a deep loyalty to, and respect for, the ancestral heritage, and a reverence for forces that guide the movement of the world. These forces form the religious consciousness of the Tiv people.

From the above, it is clear that the Tiv world-view rests on four cardinal points; viz, comprehensiveness, communality, egalitarianism and sacralism.

Comprehensiveness implies that social control was extensive; probably because of the common Tiv ancestry. It also enabled the individual to understand his obligations to society, his work and to his elders in terms of kinship. In this way, the individual got security. The social control and the individual's sense of responsibility regulated virtually all aspects of Tiv life. The comprehensiveness of the Tiv world-view was fundamentally a derivative of the traditional religion. According to Rubingh:

> *through the hundreds of akombo, each with its own area of human behaviour under its guardianship, all experience could be given cultural and religious value.*[17]

This is true because, with this control by akombo, influence on all aspects of human and societal behaviour was achieved. Thus, the Tiv world rests on the conviction of the *symbiosis of man and nature*.[18]

The communality of Tiv society shows that, despite the power, authority and wealth of an individual, that individual was not an island unto himself. This means that individuality was minimised in the interests of the whole society or clan. The fortunes or misfortunes of an individual were reflected in the lives of members of the community.

Closely linked to communality is the egalitarian nature of Tiv society. Within Tiv society, self-consciousness was discouraged by social controls so as to prevent the society from moving away from its tested and honoured patterns. Thus, any fundamental change was viewed with serious suspicion. This is because such innovation might be an embodiment of the seeds of retribution from the unseen forces (*adzov*). It was thus dangerous to venture into the unknown, as this might disturb the existing precious balance of the human and cosmic worlds. Though the Tiv might be seen as great imitators, their imitations are in the interests of retaining most of their basic way of life.

Thus the Tiv world-view gained much of its force from its Sacralism. Sacralism helped to unify experience and

thus homogenize Tiv cultural institutions.[19] This is because, every area of life had its *akombo* and the bid to unify all aspects of life meant that it was almost impossible to divorce religion from jurisprudence or economic life or morality.[20]

It can be concluded, therefore, that life and death matters exist in an environment that regards every action, behaviour or art as a communal act. Within the social, religious and political arenas of the Tiv world therefore, the *Girinya* exists to fill the vacuum that would have otherwise existed as a result of changing social and cultural patterns in a hitherto tightly knit kinship society.

The Origin of *Girinya*

The *Girinya* developed originally, as a warrior cult to defend the territorial integrity of the *Tiv* people as they migrated and acquired lands for settlement. Then, it was known as *Gber tyo* (beheaders). As the *Tiv* settled into their acquired lands, they observed the formation and sustenance of similar cults amongst their neighbours. These included the *Oju* (Igede), the Idoma, all of Benue State and the Gakem of the present day Cross-Rivers state.

The Oju (Igede) form of the *Girinya* is known as Oglinya[21] and incorporates an active masquerade form. The Idoma form of Girinya, known as *Oglinya* or *Ogalanya* (practiced mostly by the Edumoga people of Benue State), also incorporates masquerade forms to the warrior cult. The primary motif of all the cults encountered by the *Tiv* people was to protect them from attacks by other groups. The cults were organised in such a way that dance was used as a means of exercising and sharpening skills and techniques needed in warfare or battle in the period from the late 18th century to the early 19th century. As a 'military' formation then, the *Girinya* had a hierarchy, akin to the army. The *Tor Girinya* was seen as the Commander-in-Chief. He was followed by the *Tor Tough* (Chief of Staff), the *Atem* ('Breaker' or what is known in modern terms as Provost); the *Shuwa* (Spokesman) and the rest of the warriors according to the number of human heads they possessed.

Due to the relationships that later developed (marriage and commercial farming), the *Tiv* people are said to have gradually borrowed the dance aspect of the Girinya cult activity. And as the colonialism of the early 19th century introduced Christianity and the police state, the dance became the main focus of the cult activity. This was mellowed because the display of skulls and other paraphernalia was considered offensive to the Christian missions and the colonial government.

However, the *Girinya* still maintains a warrior hierarchy today and is performed at important occasions; as will be seen in the description of the performance .

The *Girinya* Performance

In its present form, the *Girinya* is performed on occasions of significance to the Tiv people; occasions such as the visit to the locality of a Governor, a distinguished son of the land, the coronation of a chief or the death of a prominent son of the land and its members. Thus, the *Girinya* is performed as a dance to entertain and as a rite of passage.

As a dance for entertainment and show of ability, the dancers come to the dancing arena dressed in singlets (vests), a loin cloth around the waist and trousers or short pants underneath; brandishing machetes.

When called upon, the dancers take their turn in the dancing arena, the *Tor Girinya* (Chief of Girinya or leader of the troupe) is always the first. He comes over to perform a solo dance of cleansing. Greeted by cheers from the *ilu* (wooden gong), the *or miar* (flute man) and the spectators, the *Tor Girinya* dances in slow, but regal shuffles round the dancing arena. He dances round making 'clearing' or weeding gestures with his machete. He does this movement round the dancing arena and back to the entrance point, where the dancers are waiting. The dancers then file out in a single formation and scatter around the dancing arena; with the Tor Girinya and the musicians in the middle. Thus scattered, the music changes beat. This serves the dance movements and the display of technique and ability as in war; that is, the stalking, leaping on prey and beheading movements.

During this dance display, the dancers watch each other carefully to catch whoever is not being attentive to his immediate environment. And to show that a dancer is attentive, when another dancer takes a leap, the other responds by leaping backwards and raising his machete high above his head. But when a dancer is caught off-guard, the blunt side of the machete is placed on the back of his neck. He then falls to the ground, signifying that he has been beheaded. The 'victor' is then carried shoulder high by his colleagues who dance round the arena in mock celebration of victory. After this celebration of victory, the dance continues, but without

the 'beheaded' colleague. This goes on until only one dancer is left in the dancing arena, with the *Tor-Girinya* and the musicians. The remaining dancer is then lifted high by his 'beheaded' colleagues and the *or miar* sings his praises.

When the remaining dancer is finally dropped to the ground, all the dancers engage in another dance movement known as *amar a kuur* (the dance of death). *A mar a kuur* requires a vigorous dance step. In a semi-crouching position, with knees slightly bent forward, the dancers keep a steady one-two hop until they fall to the ground exhausted; signifying that they have danced the evil spirits around to death. The dancers then pick themselves up and dance out of the arena.

Girinya is also performed in honour of the dead, especially dead members of the troupe, as a rite of passage. When death is the reason for performance, the *Shuwa* (the canary: spokesman) invites the members of the troupe to a meeting. When all the members of the troupe are gathered in the *Tor Girinya*'s house, they file out to the dead member's house. As they leave for the dead member's house, the *Tor Girinya* holds a young chick in his left hand and his machete in his right. As they reach the deceased's house, the dancers scatter round the compound, as if taking positions against potential attack. Then slowly as if stalking, the dancers move into the room prepared for their use. After some time in the room, *the Tor Girinya* emerges, with the young chick in his left hand and dances round the compound of the house. As he dances round, he makes mock chops at the chick's head and jabs outwards, towards the fringes of the compound; as if cutting and pushing away obstacles. Where the deceased has more than one son of the same age from different wives, they follow the *Tor Girinya* as he dances round. When the *Tor Girinya* reaches the door of the room in which the deceased is lying in state, he chops off the chick's head and allows the blood to spill on the doorposts and inside the room. At this point, the contesting sons rush for the chopped head. The one that picks up the head inherits his father's *imborivungu* (emblem of spiritual power) and also joins the *Girinya* rank.

After performing this 'cleansing' and appeasing rite, the *Tor Girinya* dances back to meet his colleagues. After a short dance, the dancers then dance in a single file towards the room in which the deceased is lying in state. As each dancer crosses the door of the room, he bends down and places his machete on the back of his neck as a final mark of respect. This stage of Girinya, as a rite of passage, is called *Lyaku-ji* (away flies)

The above is a descriptive presentation of the two types of the Girinya dance as performed today. This dance, as presented by these two types, will provide the material for an aesthetic evaluation.

Philosophical Assumptions

This evaluation is predicated on the philosophical assumption that, every work of art has a significant form[22], that is, whatever is being constructed has an aesthetic form. An aesthetic form deals with the way an object or pictorial display is put together. In such a display the objects must be considered in relation to one another compositionally. The relationships here would refer to the elements that make the performance functional for the practicing society. These include the mode of dancing, dressing (costuming), rhythm, movement, pace, tempo, etc or mimetic acts within the performance. These make up the aesthetic character of the performance. How this feeling is expressed differs from one society to another.

Different views exist as to the concept of aesthetics, though its general structure may seem basically the same. It recognises the existence, in a work of art, of beauty, form and order. But on the second level, aesthetics could be interpreted around the intrinsic value of the object experienced. As the aesthetic concept developed and gained currency, the metaphysical interpretation of experiences became of utmost significance. This metaphysical interpretation was found in Plato's fascination with the arts. He interpreted this as inspiration or heavenly madness.[23] Responding to this interpretation, Hegel became the first to apply aesthetics to the philosophy of fine art (including the performing arts).[24] He identified aesthetics and the philosophy of fine art as being the most important because of the perceptual and inspirational qualities they embodied.

These two concepts have also found firm expression in the Kantian theory of aesthetics.[25] The Kantian aesthetic theory is dominated by the concept of metaphysical determinism. Metaphysical determinism was expressed in its application of the Kantian aesthetic theory to the issue of perception and value judgement in the arts. This means that every experience of a work of art tasks the individual to intrinsically experience it and pass judgement as to what is experienced. The intrinsic

evaluation lends insight into the structure of the performance, while the value judgement raises the contextual aesthetic implications. The contextual implications may include moral value, economic value, political value, religious value and social value (norms).[26]

It is from this that the aesthetic attitude comes. According to Harold, the aesthetic attitude:

> *is the attitude of complete occupation with perceptual data, considered in their own nature, not as signifying or resulting in anything else. It is only an interest in perceptual data for their own sake.*[27]

This explains the fact that every artistic creation and performance has laws, conventions and regulations governing structure, style[28] and presentation. This is constitutively deterministic. The aesthetic experience is not intellectual but perceptual. The perception is steeped in the attendant cultural iconography. This also means that, *culture influences the perception and attitude of an individual.*[29]

Aesthetics is therefore not a concept that can be copied or transferred easily from one people to another; though similarities in structure may exist. This explains the necessity of studying and applying aesthetic concepts and theories from a cultural (society) perspective, that is *on the basis of their cultural relativity and cross-cultural comparability.*[30]

This, however, makes the study of performance aesthetic subjective. Subjective because it is inseparable from morality, and morality is inseparable from a people's culture and general world view. Thus, the study of performance aesthetic is localised, diverse and difficult. It is so localised that a general or universal approach to the study of aesthetics renders it vague. Perhaps this explains the assertion that, *the basis for one's response to beauty exists in the structure of one's mind*[14] or that *beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder*[31] and the reason for beholding. This means that the construction or perception of beauty depends on the value acquired by the individual within a cultural environment.

Baumgarten's first qualification of aesthetics as *a philosophy concerned with the concept of beauty especially as it relates to arts*[32] therefore sets the stage for consistent efforts to analyse and discover the aesthetic experience of a work of art. Significantly, he submits that every work of art must have *a significant form.*[33] 'Significant form' refers to the way an object or a display is constructed and performed. The construction would be in the arrangement of the various segments or components that make the entire performance - the presentation style, the mode of dancing, dressing or mimetic arts.

An analysis of a performance like the *Girinya,* therefore, would depend on the style and mode. The style and mode are the core of the *Girinya* form; that is, the ability to 'hang' together the different aspects of the dance to make a coherent whole for a person or group of people from both within and outside the social environment. This is the unity of the Girinya form of dance. But to create that unity and coherence, the artist separates the form from the matter of some object of experience; such as the human body or spiritual illusions or a tree, and imposes that form on another matter (like dance, mime or ritual presentation or a carving). By virtue of the re-creation of some object of experience, such a re-creation forms part of the nature or universe of those practicing it. From this perspective, the *Girinya* can be said to be an aesthetic experience re-created outside the original context but hanging together coherently to re-create the desired feeling of fulfillment and achievement.

The study of Tiv aesthetic experience, therefore, cannot be isolated from the Tiv approach to everyday life and experience. This informs Tiv society's perception and acceptance of a set of values considered right. This is because the experience, understanding and appreciation of works of art (*Girinya* dance in this case) depends upon the acceptance of an aesthetic set.[34] An aesthetic set is a particular sub-class of a perpetual set; the function of which is to disseminate, organise and interpret the ideas and information which constantly invade our perception.[35] This perpetual set can be found in the Tiv world-view, experience and everyday words that help in describing, ascribing and emphasising the aesthetic experience - for example, *Mdoom* (beauty).

According to Hagher,[36] the basic Tiv concept of beauty lies in 'lightness' and 'darkness'. He submits that:

> *Lightness is physical beauty, attractiveness loveliness and appealing --- Darkness (wa ime) as in a performance, on the other hand, means achieving distinction in artistic harmony.*[37]

This implies that the Tiv aesthetic concept and philosophy in performance is based more on the structuring and objectification of artistic creativity. This is

shown in the philosophy that all male performative arts *should be full of energy, nimbleness of feet, endurance and speed.*[38]

This forms the philosophical assumption underlying this evaluation. In addition, the Tiv adjectives that enhance the understanding of the above philosophy will be used. These include *iwanger* (brilliance), *wanger* (glowing, clear), *mdoom* (physical beauty), *Iengem* (clear, clean or brightness), *vough vough* (exactly, in accordance), *Tegh Tegh* (slowly), and *Lugh Lugh* (smoothly).

Girinya: an Evaluation

In application, *Iwanger* or *Wanger* in a dance form like *Girinya*, would refer to the execution of what is difficult and complex, smartly and with vigour to bring out its beauty. And for a dance to be considered 'brilliant' it must be guided by certain principles and techniques unique to the dance form and which enhances its uniformity and subsequently the appearance of the special skills embedded in the dance execution. The spectator finds the brilliant, not necessarily in the music or dance as a whole, but in the dancers' energy, vitality and gracefulness. This may be because, the Tiv believe that the human body is the vehicle for the transmission of vitality, energy and life through the medium of music found in the performance.

Writing about the concept of the brilliant, or *Iwanger* amongst the Tiv people, Faris says:

> *--- that which is clear is also brilliant. The Tiv have the strangely beautiful concept of a good dancer 'shooting darkness', i.e reducing the power of darkness and social heat by means of his shining aesthetic grace.*[39]

This concept of the dancer 'shooting darkness' is what Hagher referred to as *Wa ime*.[40] When a person is said to *vine amar* (do a dance), he is simply said to be involved in the creation of brilliance. The aesthetic grace could be seen at the beginning of the dance, when the *Tor Girinya* in regal shuffles, leads the dancers into the performance arena. Thus, when a dancer is said to *chagh ishool, shav ishool*, or *Kpiligh ishool* (dancing seriously and stylishly), it indicates the individual appeal of the dance entity and the degree of liveliness of the performance as displayed by that individual dancer. This liveliness in performance is one of the brilliance factors. These are vitality, energy, power, and grace.[41] These factors generally form the basis of Tiv dance aesthetics.

This shows that the aesthetic finds expression in art and the art, especially drama and theatre, finds expression in the human being through the medium of the body. That is, the body is an expressive embodiment of the emotive forces that find appeal in the human psyche.[42] The expression of *Girinya* is found in the execution of the dance steps by the dancers and the various segments that make up the entire performance. The entrance of the *Girinya* dancers into the performance arena shows the *iwanger* (brightness) of the *Girinya* dance form. With the *Girinya* dance, a single line or the serpentine formation is used for entrance before the dancers scatter round the performing arena, maintaining a loose circle formation so as to give every dancer enough space to move and dance *'sha agee'* or vigorously. It is this loose formation that allows the individual's skills to be appreciated and enables the spectators to see if the individual dancers are dancing *vough vough* (accordingly).

As a male dance, the *Girinya* requires a lot of energy, vitality, nimbleness and physical fitness. This is because the dance is carefully structured to convey the desired representational display of situations as in war, though the dance is now for mainly entertainment.

In *Girinya*, music dictates the dance phrases and the changes in action or pattern. For example, when the 'stalker' succeeds in 'beheading' his prey, the music changes tempo to reflect the celebrations that accompany victory. The music becomes lighter and faster.

Thus in this dance performance the dance and music complement each other. The music stimulates the emotions which are expressed in the movements of the dance.[43] The musical instruments, at any given time, dictate the pace, vitality and the energy the Girinya dance requires.

Mdoom (beauty) as an aesthetic quality means physical beauty or the appeal of a dance form as distinct from *iwanger*. Mdoom requires that the dancer *telegh ishool* (bend slowly and smoothly) *sha iceen* (with grace and pride) and be seen to excel in the execution of the dance. When the *Girinya* dancers engage in the dance of victory or of death (*amar a Kuur*), the individual's creativity and understanding are put to the test. The spectators are interested in seeing the *mdoom* of the dance, when the *Girinya* dancers *telegh ishool vough vough* (Dance accordingly) and seem to be involved and enjoying what they are doing. In this way, it is possible to

see the *iengem* (brightness or clarity) of the dance movements; whether it is performed *tegh tegh* (slowly, a common feature of feminine dances) or *sha agee* (with a lot of energy).

The *iengem* (brilliance or clear qualities) of *Girinya* therefore, would be found in the costuming and the execution of the dance. Dressed in vest, loincloth and holding sharp and dangerous looking machetes, the dancers try to re-create the image of a warrior. This adds to the beauty of the mimetic re-creations of war, skill and prowess. This is so, partly because iengem can be applied to

> *...any singer, story-teller, dancer, orator or any person who carried the day by sheer presence or force of personality, irrespective of his or her skill and actual appearance.*[44]

This goes to show that individual skills are appreciated in the *Girinya* dance form. The more creative the *Girinya* dancers are (to add styles not common to other dancers), the more they are seen to *engem* or *wa ime* (shoot darkness).

It is to be noted that, the *Girinya* is regarded as *amar a tswam* (dance of cruelty or viciousness) because of what inspired the dance form (war) and certain aspects (beheading) or requirements for the cult membership. This masculine quality (beheading) gives the Girinya dance its dynamics and the energy, vigour and vitality to enable the dancer dance *sha agee* and *vough vough*. Dynamics here refers to the ability or skills of the individual or group in executing a dance movement. And in achieving any dance's dynamics, the body becomes the main vehicle of execution.[29] The dynamics of *Girinya* dance thus show that an unhealthy person cannot participate. This is because *Girinya* dance, like war, requires flexibility, physical, spiritual and mental fitness and the stamina to endure. The Girinya dance is therefore dependent on its dynamics as a major value of expression.

Aesthetically, the dynamics and the general appeal of Girinya would be found in its purpose (the original concept of the dance), composition and dimension.

The composition of the Girinya dance is also very important. The composition is manifested in different forms; the entry, the positioning round the performance arena, dance movements, stalking, the celebrations and the overall pictorial feel of the performance. With the entry, it is only the *Tor Girinya* that can lead the performance. Behind the *Tor Girinya* comes the *Tor Tough* (Chief of Staff) and they are followed by the other dancers. On entry, the dancers form a circle, with the *Tor Girinya* in the middle.

Dimension, on the other hand, carries with it elements of the human skills that help in the execution *vough vough* of a dance. It also helps the individual's display of skills and styles as he perceives it or as the music stirs his emotions.

Thus the composition and dimension of the *Girinya* dance are geared towards a singular purpose; to entertain while re-creating moments of glory and achievement. With this, the dancers achieve a collective purpose. The understanding of this collective purpose helps achieve the quality of *iengem*. The aesthetic quality of *iengem* adds colour and uniformity to the collective effort of re-creation; manifested in the dance proper. Though this collectivity is very important, the dimension and individual skills and ability add greatly to the aesthetic perception of the *Girinya* dance form. This can be seen when the individual is said to *Kpiligh ishool* or *chagh ishool* (skilful exhibition of a dance mode) *vough vough*. At this point, the dancer can be said to be displaying his aesthetic experience or understanding of the creation. The dance is then seen from the point of view of individual creativity and ability. Creativity and ability play great roles in the application of a dance form like *Girinya*. This is because no two warriors can possess the same skill, ability and stamina. Though the ultimate goal would be victory and to bring back heads, the approach would differ among individuals. For example, while some warriors might hop from tree to tree stalking their prey, others might walk straight into enemy view, then take a good run, then quickly hide and takes the closest pursuer. In other words, the *Girinya* dance gives room for individuality within a collective creativity.

However, it is music that enhances the *iengem* of *Girinya*. It does not only highlight the presence of 'formal' beauty, but helps in the understanding of certain aspects of the human experience and reality as it transports a person's mood and action to a higher plane of experience and feeling. Thus, music enhances the qualities of composition and dimension through the expressive vehicle (human being). This means that music does not exist in isolation from dance; and it is true that *music in Tiv does not exist solely for itself*[45]. It has to contribute to a greater purpose - and every aspect of Tiv life[46] incorporates dance. This is why a warrior cult could also dance out its activities. This could also be explained in the light that,

Dance affirms life, negates death and evil aspects of Tsav, demonstrates the enduring solidarity of lineages and strength, the discipline, the power of its young men and women who in marriage across lineage and clan lines will procreate and perpetuate the Tiv people[47].

This is probably why dancing forms the greater part of *Lyaku-ji* (away flies). Dancing during such an occasion as death re-affirms life.

Every activity has a significant form,[48] that is, the activity is created out of the necessity of the time, its expressive purpose. In *Girinya* dance, the expressive purpose was to create a state of alertness and physical preparedness in the warriors. This is why *Girinya*, in its present form, tries to re-create or re-enact battle situations. This helps to establish, emphasise and constantly remind members of the society of their selfless duty to their fatherland. On the second level of the performance of *Girinya*, the purpose would be seen as a rite of passage, a mark of respect for a distinguished citizen. When this becomes the purpose, all dance movements and displays are geared towards the preparation of the deceased for a better life and a smooth transition to the world beyond (*mbakuv*).

Conclusion

The *Girinya* can best be appreciated and seen to carry with it the moral view of its environment. For example, the motif of clearing before the commencement of the *Girinya* performances shows the Tse-mker-Tiv people's acceptance of the existence of supernatural powers (*Tsav* and *akombo* in particular), good and bad. This is why the *Tor Girinya*, on behalf of all the dancers, seeks the protection of the good *adzov* (spirits) or *mbatarev* (owners of the land) to drive away evil spirits. Also, the whole stage of *lyaku-ji* is a purification rite. This serves to create harmony between the physical and the spiritual worlds and clear the passage for the deceased on his journey to the land of mbakuv.

In this way, the *Girinya* performance demonstrates a view of morality and social lore. In spite of being a dance, the *Girinya* conforms to the Tse-mker-Tiv people's sense of the decent, good and beautiful. Decency is seen in the composition of the *Girinya* dance. Though a war dance, when it is performed in public not all the examples of the actual occurrences in battle are displayed. But the dancer has to convince the watching public that he is capable, thereby showing the good of his efforts. When this 'good' (individual creativity) is effectively displayed, the beauty of the dance manifests itself.

The *Girinya* dance is an effective and objectified[49] dance. That is, by watching, the spectators get involved in the dance and are its judges and critics. There are no restriction as to the age of the audience. However, care is taken not to influence the young into practicing 'beheading' one another! In watching the performance, the young are expected to appreciate only the beauty of the Girinya dance and the tricks the dancers use in out-doing one another.

Therefore, *Girinya* fulfills the aesthetic criteria of the Tiv people. The costumes and the dance itself are aesthetically effective. A people watching a haphazard dance cannot talk of appeal or the physical beauty of it. The Tiv refer to such disorder as *dang dang* and would not associate any moral, religious or aesthetic quality or value to it. To qualify as an aesthetic experience, the sum total of such an event must possess value and be seen to be *vough vough* or *Doo* (good). *Mdoom* therefore highlights co-ordination, order and appeal. The overall effect would thus convey the *iengem*, *iwanger* and *mdoom* of the *Girinya* dance.

The residual theatre, whose values keep changing as the social environment undergoes cultural and technological interaction and consequent changes, continues to be relevant. This relevance is found in the new role the theatre is assuming worldwide. This role is that of a motivator towards change in all aspects of social, economic, political and religious life.

NOTES

1. This is evident from papers presented in different forums and the interest the discourse has generated. For example see: Iyorwuese Hagher, *Theatre and national development: An advocacy for an endogenous aesthetic in the coming millenium*. University of Jos, Department of Theatre Arts, 1998.
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3. Ibid., p.36
4. Downes, R. M. 1971. *Tiv Religion*, Ibadan, Ibadan University Press, p. 44.
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6. Ibid., p. 68
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14. Laura & Paul Bohannan, 1953. *The Tiv of Central Nigeria*, London, International Institute, p. 84.
15. Rubingh, op cit. 1969. p. 68.
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17. Edeba, V. Adama, 1985. *Oglinya; A dance theatre in Edumoga traditional society*, Department. of Theatre Arts, University of Jos. Unpublished B.A. (Hons) project, p.33.
18. Bell, Clive, 1968. 'Significant form' in John Hospers (Ed), *Introductory readings in aesthetics*, New York, Free press, p.11.
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Contextualising Intangible Cultural Heritage in Heritage Studies and Museology

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ABSTRACT

With this paper I make a proposal for the contextualisation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in the interdisciplinary field of heritage studies and museology, drawing on early research conducted during my internship at UNESCO and the first years of my doctorate. I examine emerging conceptualisations of the term starting with the national legislation of Japan and Korea in the 50s and 60s, and more recently with the interventions of UNESCO. In addition, I assess the development of ICH in terms of the academic/intellectual discussions around the 'alternative heritage discourse' and the 'new museological discourse'. Finally, drawing on interviews with Professor Patrick Boylan, Dr Richard Kurin and Mr Ralph Regenvanu, conducted in 2006-2007, I draw some preliminary conclusions as to the wider impact of ICH on heritage and museum theory and practice. What emerges is a critical examination of the diverse conceptualisations and appropriations of ICH, and of its potential to constitute a new heritage discourse at the interface of 'universalism' and 'particularism'

Introduction

The concept of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is probably not only the most recent, but also the most popular, of the latest additions to the heritage lexicon. A great wealth of conferences, symposia, seminars and publications has been dedicated to the subject[1]; something that demonstrates its relevance to specialists from all sorts of disciplines, from archaeologists and anthropologists to legal experts and natural scientists. While this new interdisciplinary field of study and practice

is gaining more and more momentum around the world, there seems to be a lack of a substantial body of holistic approaches theorising the concept and anticipating its broader intellectual and operational implications in the areas of heritage studies and museology.

Much of the research on ICH has been concerned with the activities of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), one of the major international cultural brokers that in 2003 adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Inspired by this, the 2004 General Conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Seoul provided the floor for the museum professionals of diverse specialities to engage with the subject. Many of the contributions to that conference were published in the first volumes of IJIH and provided practical examples and case studies of how museums and cultural institutions around the world interpret and operate *vis-a-vis* ICH. Against the backdrop of a more practical framework, this paper makes an effort to approach ICH critically, and to situate it in contemporary academic discussions in heritage and museum studies. The main research questions are: How has ICH emerged internationally and with what moral/ethical implications - What is its place in the cultural heritage arena with respect to the 'alternative heritage discourse' (Butler 2006) and the 'new museological discourse' (Kreps 2003)?

Initially, I rehearse key stages in the emergence of the concept within official UNESCO memory-work. I trace the intellectual development of ICH through the interventions of UNESCO that are entrenched in Japanese and Korean heritage conceptualisations. The aim is to tease out some of the early theoretical underpinnings of ICH related to the UNESCO paradox: the organisation's call to reconcile 'cultural relativism' and 'global ethics' (Eriksen 2001) that has often been compared to 'salvage ethnography' (Alivizatou 2007). I then juxtapose these institutional approaches to ICH with more recent discussions taking place in the field of heritage studies and museology. The key theoretical models used are Butler's 'alternative heritage discourse' (2006) and Kreps' 'new museological discourse' (2003). Here, ICH is analysed in the light of current academic/intellectual frameworks in order to bring in a more critical perspective to its theoretical conceptualisation. Finally, the examination of these theoretical underpinnings is followed by an assessment of the impact of ICH on traditional museum and cultural heritage institution roles. I venture to do this through a brief presentation of the opinions of three key actors, Prof. Patrick Boylan of City University, Dr Richard Kurin of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and Mr Ralph Regenvanu of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, as recorded in interviews conducted in Leicester, Washington DC and Paris in 2006 and 2007. What emerges is a critical and multifaceted examination of the different conceptualisations of ICH and their interconnections.

Part 1: ICH and UNESCO Memory-Work

Although the first country to request the establishment of legal and administrative measures concerning ICH from UNESCO was Bolivia, in 1973, there is little doubt that the main source of inspiration and guidance for the organisation's engagement with ICH was the legislation developed in Japan and Korea in the 1950s and 1960s. The 1950 *Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties* in Japan along with the protection of tangible heritage in the form of movable and immovable monuments, sites and works of art made a particular reference to the protection of 'intangible cultural

properties' that were threatened by the post-Second World War westernisation of the country (Saito 2005: 3). A similar law that made special provisions for the protection of ICH under the title *Cultural Heritage Protection Act* was passed by the Republic of Korea's government in 1962 (Yim 2004: 11). In this respect, living traditional culture, and the knowledge and skills associated with it, were acknowledged as a constituent element of national heritage and identity, and therefore subject to preservation for future generations.

Underlying the philosophy and rationale of the Japanese and Korean legislation on the protection of cultural heritage, is the idea that the national heritage not only consists of monuments, objects and sites, but also of living cultural expressions. These expressions that have been maintained through the past and into the present, are threatened by modernity and, consequently, state intervention is required in order to ensure their safeguarding and continuation. In this context, in 1966 the National Theatre was founded in Japan for the preservation and promotion of the country's traditional performing arts of *Nogaku, Bunraku and Kabuki* (Saito 2005: 6). Clearly, then, one of the characteristics of the conceptualisation of ICH as developed in Japan and Korea was not only its significance in terms of defining national and cultural identity, but also its fragile nature and the threat from modern ways of life. These approaches to the protection of ICH echo strongly in UNESCO programmes and activities developed in the 1990s. One such example is the Living Human Treasures Programme established in 1993 and inspired by Japanese state programmes for the continuation of traditional skills.

With respect to UNESCO's involvement with ICH, the terms that were initially used in the institutional glossary were 'traditional culture' and 'folklore'. In 1989 UNESCO adopted the *Recommendation for the Protection of Traditional Culture and Folklore*, the aim of which was to sensitise governments towards the threats posed to traditional culture. However, the *1989 Recommendation* was not successful in influencing the activities of Member States (Aikawa 2004: 140). Among the reasons for this was the terminology employed. More precisely, the term 'folklore', that was invariably used alongside the term 'traditional culture', was considered as having pejorative connotations for many non-European UNESCO Member States (Seeger 2001) and as being reminiscent of colonial thought and domination. Moreover, it was regarded as superficial because it focused on the result of the social process, rather than on the cultural or social activity that produced it (McCann et al. 2001). In this sense, the *Recommendation* was criticised for being focused on the 'product' rather that the 'producer' (Aikawa 2004: 140).

During the 1999 Conference on the 'Safeguarding of Traditional Cultures' organised by UNESCO in collaboration with the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in Washington, the weaknesses of the 1989 *Recommendation* were underlined, as was the need for a more holistic and dynamic definition of the subject matter. In addition, it was argued that UNESCO should not only focus on the archiving and documentation of cultural expressions, but primarily on gaining the support of *local communities so that they can sustain cultural practices* (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004: 58).

Subsequent consultations on the subject of the definition of ICH, such as the Turin Round Table in March 2001, the Expert Meeting in Rio de Janeiro in January 2002 and the publication of the 2002 Glossary on ICH, revealed the breadth of the area covered by the term in different geographical and cultural contexts, its relation to the tangible heritage, as well as the need to stress the importance of the people that create and sustain cultural expressions (van Zanten 2004). The end product of the above-mentioned meetings was the expanded definition of ICH in the *2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*, whereby,

> *-- intangible cultural heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. It is manifested inter alia in the following domains:*

a. oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of intangible heritage;
b. performing arts;
c. social practices, rituals and festive events;
d. knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
e. traditional craftsmanship' (UNESCO 2003 2§1).

UNESCO's adoption of the *2003 Convention* has been heralded as an event of great significance (Matsura 2004: 4; Bouchenaki 2004: 6) for the international understanding of cultural heritage. While according to the *1972 World Heritage Convention*, the definition of cultural heritage included primarily *monuments*, *groups of buildings* and *sites*, as well as *natural sites* as demonstrative of natural heritage, the new definition of ICH reveals a shift from 'static' and 'monumental' to 'dynamic' and 'living' understandings of heritage. The Head of the Intangible Heritage Section has acknowledged that the 2003 Convention is a *sister legal document* to the *1972 World Heritage Convention* (Smeets 2004: 39). However, the existence of two separate instruments for the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage reveals the institutional dichotomy between the Tangible/World Heritage and the Intangible Heritage Section. While efforts within UNESCO have taken place in order to provide for more integrated approaches towards tangible and intangible heritage, like the Yamato Declaration (UNESCO 2004), the distance between the two - even within the physical space of the Parisian UNESCO Headquarters - is still quite big.

Influences and Concerns

The broader way in which UNESCO has conceptualised and operated *vis-á-vis* ICH can be assessed in the light of the organisation's wider stance in the field of Culture. In this sense, the ICH discourse has emerged within the sphere of UNESCO's strategic planning in the field of Cultural Diversity[2]. As such, the international organisation is faced with the paradoxical challenge of reconciling its universalistic vision, rooted in the respect and protection of human rights, with the particularities and plurality of the world's different cultures. While this contradiction has been assessed critically by anthropologists[3], what remains to be seen is how ICH balances between 'cultural relativism' and 'global ethics' as a new heritage discourse. This, then, raises a set of questions as to whether the ICH discourse is rooted in an understanding of culture as tradition in need of protection, or in an understanding of culture as dynamic and continuously evolving.

So far, what emerges from the above is that ICH has been conceptualised in Japanese, Korean and UNESCO legislation primarily as an aspect of cultural heritage that, due to its 'living' and 'evanescent' nature, is in need of safeguarding from modernisation and globalisation. In this sense, UNESCO programmes and activities are often compared to 'salvage ethnography', a popular practice among early 20th century ethnographers who claimed that traditional cultures would disappear with the advent of Western civilisation and that it was their moral duty to preserve them (Penny 2002); ideas that today are hotly challenged by native groups celebrating the dynamism and continuity of their culture (Hendrix 2005).

Inherent in 'salvage ethnography' and more generally, in the idea of 'safeguarding', are the notions of 'fixity' and 'fossilisation'. In this sense, fears have been expressed that the adoption of measures for the protection of living cultural expressions may possibly hinder their further development and make them less relevant to contemporary communities. Despite the acknowledgement by UNESCO that ICH is in *constant change and evolution*, the institutionalisation of living culture through state programmes, archives and recordings could possibly 'freeze' it in space and time. In order to counteract such a scenario, during the 1999 Smithsonian Conference the opinion of James Early that *there is no folklore without the folk* was recognised as an important step in dealing with ICH in the future. The participation of 'practising communities' in the safeguarding processes has thus been acknowledged as a fundamental principle for UNESCO activities, and a way for ensuring the viability of living heritage.

A further characteristic of the UNESCO conceptualisation of ICH is an institutional separation and dichotomy between tangible and intangible heritage. Although the interconnectedness between the two terms is highlighted in the *2003 Convention's* definition of ICH, there is a lack of a broad vision regarding a more holistic approach to cultural heritage. This leads to an institutional compartmentalisation and polarisation, whereby tangible stands for dead or monumental

civilisations, and intangible for living cultures. Clearly, then, it seems that within UNESCO, ICH discourse and programming reveal a 'conservationist' approach to culture that needs to be safeguarded out of fear that it will disappear.

Part 2: ICH and the 'Anthropologisation' of the Heritage Debate

The emergence of ICH within the operational grounds of UNESCO in the 1990s demonstrates an understanding of cultural heritage that is based on an 'anthropological' approach to the notion of culture (Bouchenaki 2004; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). As such, it seems to emerge in tandem with the academic/intellectual call for 'anthropologising' and 'humanising' the heritage debate (Butler 2006; Rowlands 2002).

Such calls became stronger after the publication of David Lowenthal's book *The Past is a Foreign Country* and the ensuing debate (Ingold 1996: 201-245) that brought an 'anthropological' perspective to the understanding of cultural heritage that was chiefly dominated at the time by the mainstream Western heritage canon embodied in the 'historical approach' (Ingold 1996: 202). Butler uses this debate in order to further explore the 'anthropological' or 'memorial' approach to notions of cultural heritage and experiencing the past, and thus to provide alternative approaches to the Eurocentric understanding of heritage (2006). As such, the concept of ICH is offered as an alternative conceptualisation of culture and in opposition to the preoccupation of the West with the preservation and conservation of the material traces of the past. In other words, by being *constantly recreated by groups and communities* (UNESCO 2003), ICH seems to attest that the past is a *renewable resource* (Holtorf 2001). As a consequence, it emerges as an alternative discourse to the preoccupation of the Eurocentric heritage norm which is constructed on the values of authenticity, and the irreparability of cultural heritage.

In this sense, ICH is related to the 'alternative heritage discourse' or the 'memorial approach' (Ingold 1996: 202) that acknowledges the importance of 'memory', 'oral transmission' and 'performance' as ways for experiencing and comprehending the past. According to this perspective, the past is not a foreign country, but rather it exists in living people, in their bodies and minds, through memory. To support this argument Feeley-Harnik refers to non-Western approaches of experiencing the past, such as *the weeping 'bird sound word' songs of Kaluli funerals and gisalo ceremonies that evoke images of landscapes, paths and places through which — living people reconnect with their ancestors in seen and unseen worlds* (1996: 215-216).

Moreover, the 'memorial approach' is related to the interpretation of cultural objects. For example, Suzanne Kuechler's research on the New Ireland funerary effigies, known as *malanggan,* reveals that these objects, by being abandoned in the forest or exchanged

> *effect remembering in an active and continuously emerging sense as they disappear from view (2002: 7). Almost as if their materiality is not as important for their creators, as their ability to represent 'named images that define their access to the past as a vision for the future (ibid.).*

Clearly, then, the 'durability' of the object is less important than its 'performance' during the ritual ceremony, and its 'renewing' potential in terms of remembering the past in the future. As such, the materiality and the performance of the object are inseparable.

Within the 'memorial' heritage discourse, therefore, ICH expressed through 'memory', 'performance' and 'oral culture' seems to support alternative ways for interacting with the past. Departing from the Western preoccupation with the conservation and preservation of the material heritage for future generations, it introduces the idea of 'living heritage'. As such, it does not envision cultural heritage as a dead relic of the past, but as a corpus of processes and practices that are constantly recreated and renewed by present generations effecting a connection with the past. A shift can be observed from the preoccupation with the 'object' to an increased interest in the 'person'. Therefore, in answering the question of what constitutes heritage and heritage value, ICH would favour 'transformation' over 'authenticity', and 'renewal' over 'conservation'.

Discussions around the need to 'humanise' cultural heritage can also be traced in the world of museums.

André Malraux's *Musée Imaginaire* first published in 1947, was one of the first works to acknowledge how individuals appropriate museums and museum collections. The emergence of the *New Museology* in the UK (Vergo 1990) and the *Nouvelle Muséologie* in France (Riviere 1989) in the 1980s and 1990s further questioned the traditional role of museums by acknowledging their occasionally exclusive character, and underlining the need for more people-centred museum practice. This shift of museums towards people has also been connected to the concept of the 'ecomuseum' (Davis 1999; Poulot 2006). Developed in France in the 1970s, 'ecomuseums' aimed at relating people to their environment, cultivating their cultural identity, conserving their heritage and instigating local concern for sustainable development (Fernandez de Paz, 2003: 39). Prof. Boylan has observed how ICH can find fertile ground in 'ecomuseums', since they are not primarily concerned with objects, but with *cultural environments* (2006a: 57).

Inspired by the 'new museology' and 'ecomuseums', alternative museum concepts such as the 'post-museum' (Hooper-Greenhill 2000) and the 'poetic museum' (Spalding 2002) emerged at the dawn of the 21st century as a substitute for the 'classic' or 'modernist' museum. While the first one is concerned, among other things, with *the memories, songs and cultural traditions* related to artefacts (Hooper-Greenhill 2000), the latter is concerned with drawing out *the profounder, more elusive meanings of museum collections* (Spalding 2002: 9). In this sense, both museum concepts are concerned with exploring and bringing out the intangible dimensions of objects; elements that are not embodied in material form. This will to move beyond the material properties of artefacts reveals the potential of ICH to offer new approaches in understanding and interpreting collections.

Christina Kreps has further explored the possibilities offered by ICH in museology through *the new museological discourse* (2003: 145) and alternative modes of museum 'curatorship' (2005). As such, she uses ICH to refer to traditional knowledge concerning the conservation and preservation of objects that constitute people's cultural heritage. She also acknowledges that *indigenous curation* as an expression of ICH constitutes *a bottom-up, participatory approach* to heritage preservation that invites museums to become *stewards and curators of intangible, living and dynamic culture* (2005: 7).

Drawing on the above, it becomes evident that there are discernible differences between the conceptualisations of ICH by institutional and academic/intellectual 'heritage discourses'. While within UNESCO there is a dichotomy between tangible and intangible heritage, according to the academic/intellectual discourse objects, spaces and human expressions are regarded as interconnected and interdependent. Moreover, while the UNESCO discourse demonstrates a 'conservationist' approach to culture, academic/intellectual discussions acknowledge a variety of hybrid and diverse modes of cultural transmission not necessarily confined in 'traditional' frameworks.

Part 3: ICH as a New Conceptual Framework for Heritage Studies and Museology

While in the previous parts I examined the broad theoretical context of the emergence of ICH within the institutional discourse of UNESCO and academic/intellectual discussions, in this last part, I expound the opinions of three men who have starred in the ICH debate over the last years: Prof. Patrick Boylan, Dr Richard Kurin and Mr Ralph Regenvanu.

I met Prof. Boylan in October 2006 at Leicester Museum. His involvement with UNESCO, ICOM and the international heritage scene dates back several decades; this is the reason why his comments on the emergence of ICH were of particular significance for my research. Prof Boylan claimed that *there is nothing particularly new about the ICH discourse as such* (2006/10) referring to early 20th century cases of collecting songs, hymns and dances by different individuals, such as the Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould, Cecil Sharp and Vaughan Williams in the UK, and Bela Bartok in Hungary. He added that the reason why it has come to the fore now is that UNESCO has been trying to complete the portfolio Cultural Protection (2006/10), making special reference to the key role of UNESCO's Secretary General Koitchiro Matsuura and the Japanese Trust Fund for Intangible Heritage. However, he remarked that during the ICOM General Conference in Seoul in 2004 *many of the ICOM Committees found that there was something on ICH that could relate to their work* (2006/10). In this sense, he acknowledged that the Conference *was a wake up call to*

the museum community as to the tremendous potential of ICH for museum work (2006/10).

Dr Richard Kurin is the Director of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage (Folklife Center) in Washington DC. Our meeting took place in his office at the Center's new headquarters at L'Enfant Plaza. Dr Kurin described very eloquently the dynamics of the collaboration between UNESCO and the Folklife Center, by highlighting that *this partnership provided not only a lot of thinking around ICH, but also legitimacy and prestige* (2007/05). He also attributed the abstention of the US from the 2003 Convention to the fear by the Pattern and Trade Office that *intellectual property rights would go down a slippery slope* (2007/05). Concerning the ICOM 2004 General Conference he commented that *most of the talks and speeches in Seoul were almost cheerleady!* (2007/05), adding that *dealing with ICH is going to be hard work for museums* (2007/05). According to him, it is not about conserving and exhibiting artefacts, but an *act of social engineering* (2007/05), meaning that museums need to look beyond their walls and into the communities that they are trying to represent.

Mr Ralph Regenvanu, the former Director of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre, answered my questions during his visit to Paris in May 2007. One of the first things that he remarked with respect to the emergence of ICH was that *it reflected the concerns of the non-European world* (2007/05) as opposed to the previous UNESCO Conventions that were informed by the Western historical tradition (2007/05). As such, he acknowledged the broad concept of ICH as inclusive of objects, monuments, cultural or natural sites and related the emergence of ICH to a postcolonial turn for UNESCO. As far as museums and heritage institutions are concerned, he remarked that *for museums to engage with ICH, this requires a complete and total transformation* (2007/05). Talking about European museums he confessed that *I do not hold hope that they can deal with ICH adding that they have so much colonial baggage that it is going to be very hard for them to move on and transform all that* (2007/05). As opposed to that, he referred to the practice of Pacific museums that *are dealing with ICH by becoming cultural centres* (2007/05).

Summing up these interviews, several key themes emerge relating to the potential of ICH to constitute a new conceptual framework for cultural heritage and museum studies. Firstly, all the interviewees underlined the inclusive nature of the concept. It is not focused on single items, such as a musical performance or a song, but on broader processes. In this sense, Mr Regenvanu observed that *we should not speak of ICH simply as cultural expressions or traditional knowledge, but as a process, a lived, evolving interaction* (2007/05). In the same tone, Dr Kurin remarked that ICH should not be treated in isolation, because *it is not just about art and crafts, but it is really about peoples' lives* (2007/05), adding that Australian Aboriginal knowledge of the land has to do with Australian Aboriginal land rights. *It is not just a custom; it has to do with their lives* (2007/05). Prof Boylan's observation that *you can't really separate tangible and intangible heritage* (2006/10) alludes not only to the inseparability of the material and the immaterial in terms of conceptualising the notion of cultural heritage, but also to the more complex understanding of cultural heritage that informs peoples' identities.

A second theme emerging from the interviews was the engagement of communities as a defining element of the conceptualisation of ICH. A consensus prevailed among the interviewees that state involvement could lead to the 'formalisation' and the 'bureaucratisation' of ICH and the subsequent alienation of the communities. Prof. Boylan observed how *UNESCO's narrow view on authenticity* (2006/10) could make communities become disaffected. In this sense, Mr Regenvanu quite provokingly remarked:

> *If the community who is the bearer and practitioner of a tradition decides to alter the tradition for the purpose of making money, is that a distortion? Or maybe is the intervention of museums, UNESCO or anthropologists saying that they can't do that the real distortion? (2007/05).*

In this context, Dr Kurin's opinion that *culture is not preserved because someone put it in a museum or an archive; it is preserved because it lives in the society; it is real and it is living* (2007/05) reveals how intimately related are the concept of ICH and the broader socio-political context in which it exists.

This leads to the third theme emerging from the interviews and concerning the impact of ICH on museum

work. Dr Kurin's call for museums to become enmeshed in 'social engineering' indicates new roles and directions *for doing cultural representation* (2007/05). He claimed that the uncritical way in which ICH was endorsed and celebrated in ICOM's 2004 General Conference revealed the failure of museum professionals to distinguish the challenges stemming from their involvement with ICH. According to him, dealing with ICH is not about preserving artefacts in storerooms, but *helping people continue their culture* (2007/05). Mr Regenvanu talking about the inabilities of Western museums to deal with ICH commented that *ICH is tied to place, resources and obviously communities and communities do not live in these museums* (2007/05). As an alternative he referred to the practice of the Vanuatu Cultural Centre that is 'out in the community' and concerned not only with collecting and recording different aspects of living culture, but also with informing and educating *ni-Vanuatu* about the benefits of sustainable development and the need to combine traditional and Western knowledge. Along similar lines, Prof. Boylan acknowledged that ICH suggests new roles for museums not only in terms of collecting living culture and contextualising collections, but also with respect to *treating real contemporary-like issues* (2006/10).

Conclusions

With the above in mind, several conclusions can be drawn relating to the intellectual and operational challenges raised by the examination of the appropriations of ICH and its potential to constitute a new heritage discourse. The assessment of the different approaches reveals the contradictions embedded in its broader conceptualisation: on the one hand, it is regarded as something fragile and endangered and on the other as something in constant change and evolution.

In part one, within the official UNESCO memory-work, ICH emerged initially as a 'euphemism' for the pejorative and parochial term 'folklore'. However, following the broader definition adopted in the *2003 Convention* after consultations with academics and communities and making reference to *cultural objects and spaces*, it came to encompass a lot more than what traditionally would be considered as 'folklore'. Interestingly, the adoption of the new, inclusive terminology by UNESCO still remains to be implemented through more integrated tangible/intangible heritage projects and operational frameworks.

Alternatively, within the recent academic/intellectual discourses that I rehearsed in part two, ICH seems to obtain a more expanded significance. It emerges as a process in constant evolution that cannot be 'frozen', nor separated from its context, the latest being aspects of both 'material culture' like the *malanggan* mentioned earlier, and of 'living culture'. In terms of contemporary museological approaches, ICH has been related to the idea of 'indigenous curation', in other words to the inclusion of traditional knowledge systems in museum work, such as the conservation and interpretation of collections. Therefore, ICH is not envisioned as a category of cultural heritage that is endangered and as such, in need of safeguarding, but rather as an intellectual framework from which new roles for heritage institutions and museums can be envisaged.

These new roles and directions for museums and heritage institutions were also underlined in part three, via the brief presentation of the perspectives of Prof. Boylan, Dr Kurin and Mr Regenvanu. Although all of the interviewees agreed that dealing with ICH would involve new directions and fundamental changes in how museums perceive their role in society, it was agreed that it could also signify a new period in museum work by opening up to communities. As such, the idea of the 'museum as a palace for collections' is substituted for the idea of the 'museum as a dynamic cultural centre' (West 2007). The implementation of the new roles for museums as 'social engineers' requires a fundamentally different museological approach, focused not only on artefacts, but also on people. For this reason, in an earlier paper on the impact of the *2003 Convention* on museum training, Prof. Boylan acknowledged that

> *the initiative will require museum personnel to possess new and different knowledge, skills and attitudes, just as its corollary, staff training and professional development offerings and programmes, will be obliged to revise their contents and methodologies (2006a: 63).*

What remains to be seen is, on what terms ICH will evolve as a new heritage discourse; in other words, which elements of its conceptualisation will prevail: 'tradition' or 'change', 'relativism' or 'universalism'. From the above, it

becomes clear that while UNESCO is trying to balance the two within the ethical sphere of universal human rights, the intellectual/academic world is interested in the more hybrid, contested and changing components of living culture that are often at the margins of the UNESCO governmental policies. Although it is still too soon to tell whether this new ecumenical discourse on ICH will effect any change, the interest with which museums around the world approach it and endeavour to incorporate it into their practice reveals their willingness to identify and undertake new roles and responsibilities *vis-á-vis* the curation of living culture. In this sense, it is quite possible that as the cultural heritage discourse has been significantly enriched by the concept of ICH in terms of providing a more inclusive and people-oriented understanding of conceptualising the past, so can the world of museums potentially benefit from this new approach with respect to establishing profound and long-lasting relations with extra-museum communities and making cultural representations reflecting not only artefacts, but real people and their lives.

NOTES

1. For example, in 2006 the Museum Ethnographers Group Annual Conference on 'Feeling the Vibes: Dealing with Intangible Heritage', the 7th Annual Heritage Symposium at the University of Cambridge on 'Tangible - Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Sustainable Dichotomy?', in 2006-2007 the seminar series organised in Paris by the Laboratoire D'Anthropologie et D'Histoire de l'Institution de la Culture (LAHIC) on Intangible Cultural Heritage and different publications, such as: Deacon, H., Dondolo, L., Mrubata, M. and Prosalendis, S. 2004, *The Subtle Power of Intangible Heritage: Legal and Financial Instruments for Safeguarding Intangible Heritage*. Cape Town: HSRC Publishers. Jade, M. 2006, *Patrimoine Immateriel: Perspectives d'Interpretation du Concept de Patrimoine*. Paris : L'Harmattan.
2. Among other activities the adoption of the 2001 *Universal Declaration on the Protection of Cultural Diversity* and the 2005 *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.*
3. For example, see the critique by Thomas Hylland Eriksen of the report on O*ur Creative Diversity.*

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- Kurin, R. 2007. Interview conducted by the author on May 18th, at the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Washington.
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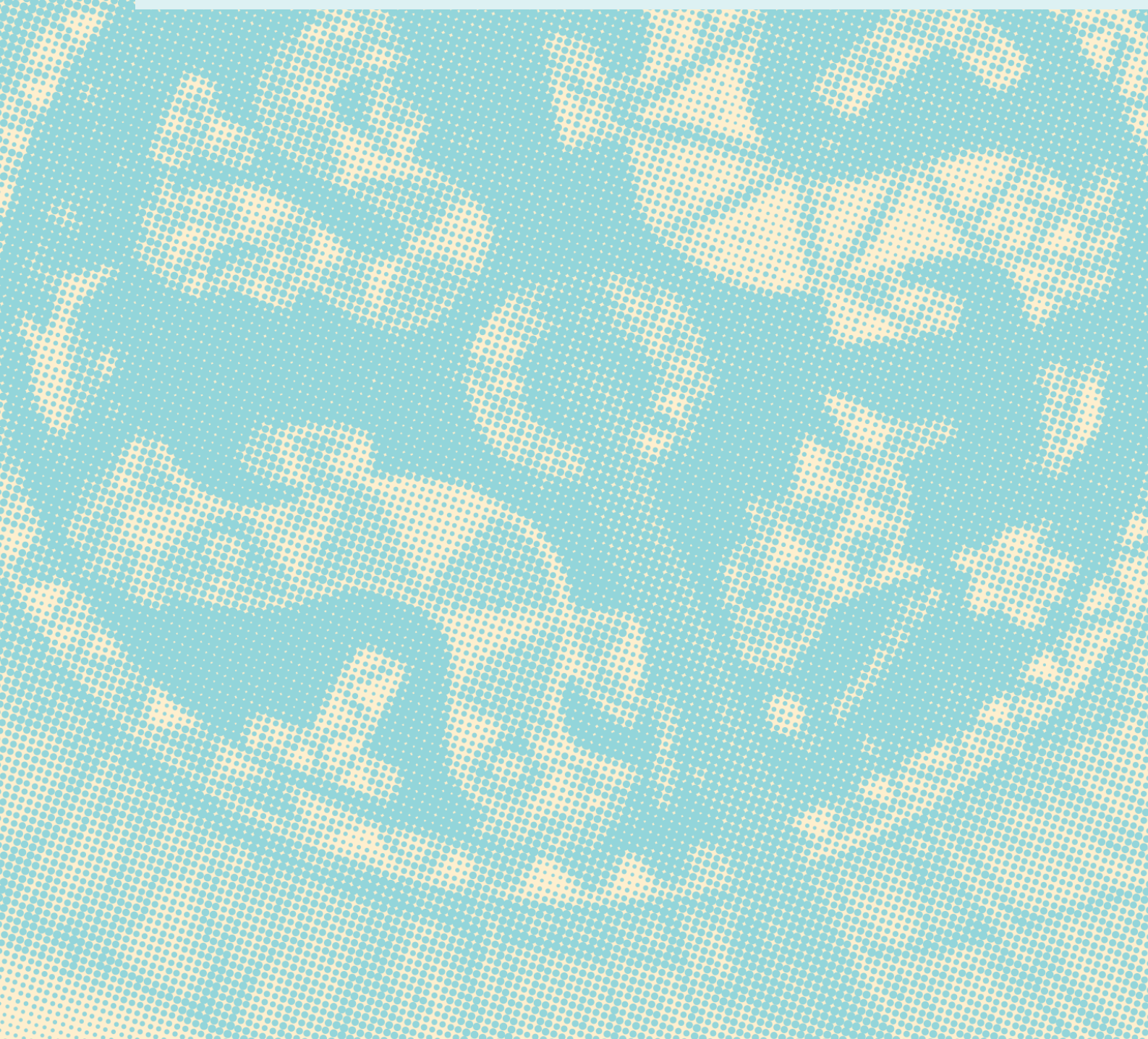
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Cosmology: an Intangible Heritage Exhibition and Educational Programme at the Museum of Astronomy, Rio de Janeiro

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ABSTRACT

The intangible heritage is not easy to present in a museum exhibition, and this is perhaps especially so in the case of what the 2003 UNESCO Intangible Heritage Convention terms 'knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe'. The Brazilian Federal Museum of Astronomy and Related Sciences (MAST), Rio de Janeiro, initiated an exhibition and educational programme on this theme for International Museums Week in 2004, focusing particularly on four very different cosmologies (i.e. narratives that attempt to explain the origin of the Universe): the Biblical story in Genesis, the contemporary scientific 'Big Bang' theory, and the creation stories of two Brazilian indigenous populations: the *Tukâno* people of the Amazon Region, and the *Guarani* of southern Brazil and some neighbouring countries. The event, called *Myths of Origin - man and his comprehension of the Universe and of the planet on which he lives,* consisted of a conceptual, sensory and educational experience whose principal objective was to challenge preconceptions while questioning also the visitors' perceptions which arise from an educational system where many of these ideas are taught as absolute truths. Following Paulo Freire's theory of learning and a non-restrictive understanding of the sciences, we chose to present the four different narratives on an equal basis and invited the visitor to explore these without preconceptions. The underlying objective was to establish a dialogue among these diverse discourses about the cosmos, which we hoped would encourage visitors to take a critical view of the sciences and the way they are interpreted in museums.

The Challenge

The Brazilian Federal Museum of Astronomy and Related Sciences (Museu de Astronomia e Ciências Afins - known as MAST), in Rio de Janeiro, founded in 1985, is based on the historic site and buildings of the National Observatory. Originally established in 1827, the Observatory developed major programmes of research and the provision of data on meteorology, astronomy, geophysics, and the measuring of national standards of time. The Observatory relocated to the present site in 1909, and with its related institutions is still based there.

MAST is centred on the original 1909 main building of the National Observatory, but also cares for the surviving historic structures, buildings, telescopes and other observation instruments no longer in use, all of which were designated as being of national cultural heritage importance by IPHAN (Instituto Brasileiro do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional, the Brazilian Federal heritage agency) in 1986. In addition to its important museum and educational roles and conservation responsibilities in relation to the scientific collections, and the official and individual scientific archive collections and the historic monuments in its care, MAST is also designated as a national research centre devoted to the study of the history of science and of advanced science education. The regular museum displays and exhibitions aim to contribute to a better and more widespread understanding of the history of scientific policy and practice in Brazil. Therefore, since its establishment in 1985, MAST has created regular cultural and educational programmes offering visitors opportunities for individual scientific cultural improvement.[1]

MAST regularly supports the annual International Museums Day of ICOM (the International Council of Museums), which in Brazil is presented within a national Museums Week, and which offers a series of activities across the country related to each year's international theme for Museum Day. Examples of such activities at MAST have included a special exhibit and a related series of debates focusing on advances in the scientific field, or research results and discussions about a pre-selected theme. More than just a challenge, these also provide an excellent opportunity to reinforce knowledge of the work of the research teams in the history of science and in science education and communication, with the aim of breaking down stereotypes and preconceived judgments that have developed about science and its practices.

For 2004, the selected International Museums Day theme was Museums and the Intangible Cultural Heritage (otherwise known as the immaterial heritage), and at first this did not seem to be of very obvious relevance to a specialised science museum such as MAST. However, discussion eventually focused on the definitions in the recently adopted UNESCO Intangible Heritage Cultural Convention, and in particular the fourth category of *'knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe'*.[2] With this in mind, it was decided to look at problems related to scientific theory and knowledge, especially since we consider that science (like any form of knowledge production) is a specific type of socio-cultural outcome, and hence has a distinct intangible knowledge aspect. In order to respond to the challenge presented by the week's theme, we therefore agreed to focus on the production and consumption of scientific knowledge, while not restricting this to the processes, elaborations and understanding of science in the modern academic world alone, but to include traditional views of scientific phenomena as well.





Figure 1
Front of the main Brazilian National Observatory building of 1909, Rio de Janeiro - since 1985 the headquarters of the Museum of Astronomy and Related Sciences (MAST)

Figure 2
Aerial view of part of the MAST site showing five of the historic telescope observatory buildings

Within this theme, and having regard to the central museological and educational role of MAST, different views of cosmology were adopted as the key theme upon which we would base the series of activities at MAST to mark Museum Week 2004, on the assumption that cosmology in its widest sense - covering all systems of thought, ideas and knowledge about the Cosmos - can be considered as significant parts of the intangible cultural heritage. Reflecting, among other things, recent work of the IPHAN[3] and of MAST itself, we now consider that the products and testimonies of different peoples, whether traditional or contemporary, are part of the culture of the people and of their multiple cultural-historical traditions, alongside their movable and immovable cultural assets and their artistic expressions. Equally, knowledge produced by the observation and scrutiny of nature, including mythology, technology, rituals, forms of nutrition and everything relating to the ethnic and social diversity of human beings, needs to be considered part of the cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible) of the populations or other groups concerned.

It is clear that over recent decades a broader, people-oriented rather then object-oriented, concept of the cultural heritage has become widely accepted and notably now includes the intangible cultural heritage, which, almost by definition, requires a broader intellectual awareness and an openness to new sorts of knowledge.[4] This is certainly the case with the world's wide range of cosmological narratives, whether representative of traditional knowledge systems or of modern, academically-constructed, scientific systems. In planning for MAST's involvement with the intangible heritage of views of the nature of the universe, we deliberately placed scientific and traditional cosmologies in the same epistemological category, since both are seen to represent examples of the systematic or non-systematic theories which are part of people's attempts to understand the universe.

Having adopted cosmology as our subject, we decided to present some examples of 'origin' myths, as we were convinced that from these narratives we would be able to focus on some fundamental ideas about the views on the origin of the universe, referring in particular to the point of view expressed over recent years by the Brazilian cosmologist Mario Novello, especially his argument that *'cosmology is the study of the nothingness and the processes through which it had evolved from being as such'*.[5] We also decided that we should examine theories of the origin of the universe derived from scientific knowledge of recent centuries alongside those of traditional mythology and on an equal basis without any hierarchical distinction, instead regarding them all as outcomes of different human interactions with the environment.

In order to achieve our purpose we needed to focus on one central aim: to show that curiosity, inquiry and ideas about the Cosmos exist in all human societies, past or present.[6] We therefore proposed to launch a temporary new exhibition and a multi-faceted programme of activities for the visitors for the 2004 Museums Week programme. The aim was that this should not only disseminate knowledge about myths and theories on the origin and nature of the universe, but also provide scientific information and knowledge - whether erudite or not - in order to communicate an overview about the existence and nature of the Cosmos.

In planning the exhibition, we felt certain that a four-way dialogue amongst the many and diverse discourses about the Cosmos that would give an interesting

perspective on science and how it is interpreted in museums, could be built around four cosmological models:

1. one example of contemporary scientific cosmology: the 'Big Bang' theory,
2. one religious narrative: the Biblical account of the Creation of the World in the Book of Genesis,
3. & 4: two different traditional cosmological narratives regarded as representative of Brazilian ethnic diversity: those of the *Tukâno* people of the Amazon Region, and the *Guarani* of the south of Brazil.

We decided that in order to better capture the local colour of the two indigenous narratives, these should be presented in their original languages accompanied by a Portuguese translation, and supported by selected images and indigenous music relating to each of the Brazilian cosmological representations that we had chosen. With this mixture of elements, and similar supporting material for the Big Bang and Biblical cosmologies, we created an audio-visual piece of work, on a CD-ROM, the showing of which became the centerpiece of the Museums Week special programmes. In accordance with our chosen educational strategy (discussed below), the images, sounds and narratives were deliberately not depicted in a simultaneous or linear manner, since our chief purpose was to break down stereotypes and to invite visitors to think outside of their established scholarly assumptions.

The event, called *Myths of Origin - man and his understanding of the Universe and the planet on which he lives*, which took place from 18 to 23, May 2004, provided a scientific and cultural experience of a kind that in its conceptual and museological approaches had never before been tried in MAST. Generally, MAST's educational activities focus on themes directly related to the sciences as they are today defined and presented in universities, research institutes, laboratories, museums and so on. The originality of the proposal was that it involved conceptual, sensory and educational experiences the main objective of which was to challenge established and even commonsense assumptions, and especially to question the visitors' mental models developed during their education.

Rolling the Dice

In particular, we were proposing quite new, or at least very different, 'readings', separating these from those that had long been regarded as common ground within the scientific field. Above all, the programme challenged what had, since at least the Enlightenment of the 18th century, been regarded as a commonsense, indeed fundamental, separation of science from myth: within the positivist scientific tradition science and myth have long been considered as irreconcilable. The word 'science' has become a synonym for truth, while 'myth', a Greek word meaning 'narrative', is nowadays commonly used as a synonym for 'false'. In contrast with that view, and based on a general 'gnosiological' (i.e. philosophy of cognition) perspective, we decided that we should consider science and myth as two constitutive and legitimate forms of the process of acquiring knowledge, with each of them in their own way following a particular logic and a set of historical-cultural rules.

Consequently, one the objectives in our proposal for a multimedia presentation of contrasting themes in cosmology, was to get the visiting public to re-evaluate the information they had learned from teachers in the classroom as pupils and students, from reading, or even from the bastardised versions of science presented by the media. At the same time we wanted to reflect the provisions of Article 14 of the 2003 UNESCO Intangible Heritage Convention, which deal with education, awareness-raising and capacity-building, and in particular that:

Each State Party shall endeavour, by all appropriate means, to:

(a) ensure recognition of, respect for, and enhancement of the intangible cultural heritage in society, in particular through:
(i) educational, awareness-raising and information programmes, aimed at the general public, in particular young people;
(ii) specific educational and training programmes within the communities and groups concerned;
(iii) capacity-building activities for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage, in particular management and scientific research; and
(iv) non-formal means of transmitting knowledge

We therefore proposed that the exhibition: (1) should propose an open approach to cosmology, and (2) should not encourage pre-conceptions about the way we learn.

However, the main purpose was to call the attention of the public to the need to respect cultural diversity. When it comes to questions related to the Brazilian Indian nations, we are frequently confronted with cultural and historical bias. The most common idea about the Brazilian Indians is that they represent something from the past and that they did not have any ways of learning, and it was to counter this that we decided to give equal weight to each of the four scientific, mythic and religious stories about the origin of the universe that we were examining and explaining. Despite the fact that most of the Brazilian indigenous communities suffered a process of aggressive culturalisation as a means of integrating them into the dominant society, a considerable number of ethnic groups succeeded in standing up for their right to keep their ancestors' heritage.

The best example of this historic and cultural persistence are the *Guarani* people, who nowadays spread across not only the southwestern and southern states of Brazil, but also parts of Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay, and who remain one of the most important ethnic nations in Brazil. Historically, ever since Brazil's discovery and conquest by the Portuguese in the XVIth century, the *Guarani* people have had considerable cultural interaction with the dominant European colonial, and now postcolonial, society, but they have still been able to preserve their ancient traditions.

The traditional *Guarani Mbya* account of cosmology, which we recorded live, was very succinct. The interviewee was Nhamandu Vera Mirim, a school teacher at the *Tekoa Itatim*.[7] He explained that the *Guarani* universe was created by Nhamandu by continuously expanding his divine body. They believe that what is real and perfect belongs to the divine or ideal world, that is why they consider what is visible to be only an ephemeral image (therefore subject to change, and thus considered to be only an ephemeral image, or an elusive copy, of the real world). The sky, people, plants, animals and all historic time and events are seen as imperfect images of their celestial counterparts. For the *Guarani*, true beauty and perfection are related to the invisible world, which for them is the home of the gods, a world that is not subject to change or decay, rather, it is a place of everlasting life and of true knowledge. The *Guarani* refer to this cosmic and sacred place as *Yvy Mara'ey*, the land of no evil.

The *Tukâno* Indians, who call themselves *Ye'pe Mahsã, or Dasea*, are also an example of resistance in terms of their cultural development and the preservation of their ethos. They live in the Amazon region of Brazil and are culturally and linguistically the dominant ethnic group in the area of the Rio Uaupes (Uaupes River) and its surrounding area. There they have formed a complex and unique linguistic and cultural community with other indigenous peoples in the region, reflecting historic domination patterns and economic co-operation (with several groups producing and trading goods amongst themselves), and also because of the establishment of new family relationships, especially through inter-tribal marriage. One of the outcomes of this cultural complexity is that an average adult in the region is able to speak about five languages.[8]

We interviewed a *Tukâno* teacher called Doethyró Tukâno. According to him the *Tukâno* universe was created by an entity the *Tukâno* know as 'the Grandmother of the Universe' out of the smoke of her pipe. This pipe smoke was the very substance from which the universe was formed. She also created a lineage of celestial entities called the 'thunder-beings', who, in turn, had the duty to create all other beings. The *Tukâno* heroic genealogy states that all humanity originated from a trip that the divine beings took across the Rio Negro (Black River) on a gigantic device which was part snake, part canoe. This floating device also took along with it some invisible beings who were transported in the form of crystal stones. Once those invisible beings touched land, they were immediately transformed into people from whom a diversity of ethnic groups were derived, each of them speaking a different language and displaying the cultural signs of their ethnic identities.

In between the sequence of both of these indigenous narratives, we presented first the 20th century scientific 'Big Bang' theory in a didactic manner, and then a narrated version of the Biblical account of the origin of the universe.[9] The cosmological model commonly known as the 'Big Bang' theory, was presented in a recording by the physicist Dr. Henrique Lins de Barros. In this he affirmed that the initial state of the universe was a

condensation of electromagnetic particles containing radiation with large densities and high temperatures. The universe would have originated from a single initial cosmic event which caused the disintegration of one original atomic nucleus, and it is that initial event which is generally summed up as the 'Big Bang'. The theory derives from Einstein's theory of gravitational relativity and had been well known in the scientific community since the 1920s (Einstein was the most famous scientific visitor to what is now the main MAST building, when visiting the National Observatory in 1925.). However, the Big Bang theory only became the preponderant popular late 20th century scientific model explaining the origin of the universe from the early 1970s, through the efforts of scientists such as Edwin Hubble, and the popularisation of Einstein's Theory of Relativity in the media.

In the interests of scientific precision, we must observe that, contrary to the widespread notion that a single explosion generated the universe, the 'Big Bang' theory more accurately refers to a model of a universe conceived as a structure made of matter and energy that: (a) is in constant movement and (b) does not reduce to a point of equilibrium. That means that since the universe is geometrically homogeneous, the same physical properties are displayed throughout. This depiction implies that the universe does not have one centre which would have resulted from a primal explosion, despite what is commonly published by the media. To be more precise, the well known popular expression 'Big Bang' is a metaphor for the process *by which all of space comes into homogenous existence from one single time of origin.*[10]

In the case of the presentation of the Biblical cosmology MAST's librarian Lucia Lino, as the narrator for this, chose to read the account of the six days of creation that forms the first Chapter of the Book of Genesis, describing how God created the Earth, the stars and everything else, through to *'And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day'* in verse 31.

Making the Intangible Material

We were aware that a side effect of the methodology we had chosen was that it would be more difficult to transmit concepts and abstract theories in this way, especially when confronting the conceptual issue of the intangible heritage. Moreover, we knew that our proposition would be awkward to manage both because of its formal approach and because of the content we had selected. A few of the questions with which we would have to deal were:

(a) how to select, capture and present abstract and intellectual concepts to a diverse audience,
(b) how to explain something that is intrinsically intangible,
(c) what resources to use, and



Figure 3
An early 1920s telescope observatory building: part of MAST's historic site and collection. Photo. Luiz Carlos Borges



Figure 4
The Guarani School, Tekoa Itatim, in Paraty, Rio de Janeiro. Photo. Ana Claudia Bastos, used by permission

(d) how to define and explain concepts inextricably related to the notion of intangible heritage, while at the same time using language that would allow the public to interact actively and critically with what we were presenting to them.

These four questions presented challenges in three distinct areas in relation to our theme. The first was about methods of interpretation, the second concerned the definition of cosmology, and the third was related to the definition of intangible heritage and how to deal with this rapidly growing field of the cultural heritage, both theoretically and as a presentation in a museum setting.

The first part was a continuous public showing of a specially made CD-ROM containing images, cosmological narratives and music. This material focused on a few of the theories about the creation of the universe[11] relating to the three principal types of cosmological thinking: the religious, the scientific/philosophical and the mythical.[12] The CD-Rom was exhibited in a special location, called the 'Dark Room' - which is in fact part of MAST's long term exhibit called *Four Corners of Origin*. The Dark Room displays a graphic representation of the universe, in which the visitor finds some reproductions of the area of sky known as the 'Zodiac Zone'. The effect produced by the use of a black light in a dark atmosphere attempts to simulate for the visitors the sensation of having been transported into the centre of the universe (that is, moving from an Earth-centric view to a Cosmos-centred perspective), and challenging the geocentric perspective of most visitors. For the same reason, we thought that this particular room would fit our purposes, due both to its environmental characteristics and to its effect on the visitors' existing knowledge.

A different, more participatory, approach was adopted in a different part of the overall cosmology programme. In contrast with the four cosmologies already outlined, this placed a particular emphasis on the Graeco-Roman mythological tradition, addressing questions and answers about the solar system, planets and myths. MAST also offered some other activities related to the International Museums Day theme, although they were not directly integrated to our methodological approach. This is the case of the Observation of the Sky Programme which discussed issues related to the preservation of the sky we see. The Museum Tells a Tale was another of these activities and the stories that were told induced the audience to discuss about the preservation of immaterial heritage.

Finally, we organised a cycle of public lectures and debates in which specialists discussed specific themes in cosmology and in intangible heritage. These were: *Is it possible to consider difference as heritage?* (by Regina Abreu, Professor of the Master's Programme in Social Memory at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro/UNIRIO), *The Cosmology of the XXIst Century* (by Cesar Caretta, MAST Astronomer), *Does a Cosmological Darwinism Exist?* (by Gastão Galvão, MAST historian of science), and *Looking at the Guarani sky, or a walk on the Tapir Path* (by Luiz C. Borges, MAST historian of science).



Figure 5
The Opi (house of praying), the most important building: this is the heart, both social and religious, of any Guarani village. Photo. Ana Claudia Bastos, used by permission



Figure 6
Guarani representations of some of the constellations of their sky on the wall of a village school. Photo. Luiz Carlos Borges





Figure 7
A sky-wheel: one is found in the house of every Wayana (a group living in Amapa, north of Brazil). Photo. Luiz Carlos Borges

Figure 8
Mekaton, a ceremonial hat of the *Kapayo* of southern Para. It shows what they knew of the sky and of their mythical origins.

One important question troubled us throughout the whole process of developing the exhibit: how to define our understanding of cosmology within the emerging framework of intangible heritage studies and, most importantly, how to explain it in didactic museological language while emphasising that in considering cosmological concepts we were dealing with a type of asset whose essential characteristic is to be intangible. As part of this we began to analyse the new Brazilian federal policy which concerns the identification and drawing up of sets of inventories regarding the respect and protection of intangible cultural heritage as stated by the *Decree 3.551*, issued in August 4, 2000. This was based upon the 1989 UNESCO General Conference *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore*, which recommended Member States to institute the making of inventories of their intangible cultural heritage.

It was nevertheless necessary to consider some conceptual and practical problems that arose. These included (1) defining what cultural heritage is and for whom an object is defined as 'cultural' and as 'heritage', (2) distinguishing between material and immaterial heritage, since in many cases such a distinction just does not seem to apply, and (3) how to define what is 'traditional' and for whom this applies, particularly as the Intangible Heritage Convention's Operational Guidelines, policies and precedents are still under discussion and negotiation. The anthropologist Regina Abreu, whose studies focus mainly on heritage, proposes a definition which, though we accept it is provisional, helped us to relate different systems used for the production of knowledge to each other. According to this author, when looking for traditional knowledge we need to understand the types of knowledge that are *defined as innovations and creations from the traditional base, resulting in intellectual activity* from communities which are *producers of singular, specific and unique knowledge.*[13]

With respect to the intrinsic material aspects or associations of expressions of the intangible heritage, there were some important issues we needed to consider. Firstly, there is the assertion that *what is subject to preservation as cultural heritage are not the objects, but their meanings and interpretations.*[14] Secondly, as Patrick Boylan shows, over the centuries the traditional concern of most museums and national laws and policies has been to emphasise the material or tangible aspects of the cultural heritage rather than the intangible aspects of it.[15] What worried us is what we saw as a bureaucratic perspective which largely ignored the associated immaterial qualities and values - as may be deduced from statements such as: *'museums have yet to consider questions that lies behind the materiality of objects'.*[16] The principal focus of official heritage policies places the emphasis upon identification, inventory, protection and preservation of those organised cultural elements arbitrarily classified as 'heritage'. If this is the core of heritage policies, we should then ask ourselves what lies behind this over-emphasis on the material, and consequently on what parts of cultural heritage should continue to be preserved?

In respect of temporal factors, contrary to Oliven's claim[17] we believe that the idea of heritage is not defined

by the past, but precisely by what exists in the present, even allowing that, as an historical construction, all heritage has strong specific socio-cultural characteristics due to its construction and the institutionalising of social memory. We agree with the Greek-born philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis (1922-1997) when he states that heritage can only be defined *'to the extent that it relates concomitantly to the social institution and to other heritage to which it is similar'*, that is, when it co-exists and co-operates diachronically and synchronously with all others aspects of heritage and society. To summarize, in order to exist as heritage, it is necessary that any object or process lends itself to representation. In other words, to be classed as heritage, an object must become institutionalised in the socio-historical memory; it has to become a part of the *'imaginary social meanings to which it belongs'.*[18] In Boylan's words, any policy concerning heritage must take into account *'the need to understand the interactions between communities' development and the processes which originated from communities' efforts'.*[19]

In any case, besides all the questions about heritage, we still had to deal with another very elusive issue: the definition of cosmology. This proved to be a challenging task, firstly because of the implications of our approach in the face of the nature of the development of scientific knowledge, and secondly, as Mario Novello[20] would argue, because the epistemological realm of cosmology finds itself in the middle of a dispute for hegemony among various domains of science. We were, however, concerned mainly with finding an appropriate type of museum presentation, and were attempting to create a design flexible enough to cover all the mythological/cosmological theories found in a range of cultural traditions. For us, a generic definition such as *cosmology is the study of the nothingness and of the processes through which it has evolved from being as such*[21] would suffice.

Within the aims and scope of our project, we therefore defined cosmology as a specific field of knowledge whose analytical framework consists of a systematic, though heterogeneous, body of statements, based on observation and expertise, which convey a series of explanations - each of them claiming to be true - for the intrinsically problematic question of the origin of the universe. This definition also included the formation, creation and expansion of the space-time dimension, of all celestial entities and objects, as well as all the origin narratives that attempt to explain this phenomenon. It was beyond the scope of our project to discuss the deeper theoretical issues, whether philosophical or physical, raised by the above statement (such as defining 'nothingness', or the scope and boundaries of the cosmologic field).

Again, it is in Novello's work that we find the key reference to justify the reasons why we decided to present different types of knowledge about the origins of the universe in a non-hierarchical format. According to him, a cosmologist is someone whose eyes, while scrutinising the world, try to capture the whole in a way that recognises as legitimate the diverse models which, throughout time and despite different types of socio-cultural development, have attempted to explain the origin and meaning of the universe. We were well aware that there were both scientific and political tensions in trying to link these ideas, as Pierre Bourdieu[22] clearly demonstrates. Furthermore, we had to bear in mind that all bodies of knowledge are engaged in a permanent struggle for supremacy against all other bodies of knowledge. As a result, to try to discredit other bodies of knowledge became a common strategy in the scientific field.[23]

The Exhibit the Visitors See

After having been exposed to the mythological cosmologies presented in the Dark Room, the visitors passed on to another activity called *Myths of the Solar System*, which was developed specially for a more scholarly audience. The idea behind this exhibit was simple and clear. It consisted of a brief introduction to Graeco-Roman mythology, following which participants were invited to choose a number between one and eleven. The number chosen was then linked to a question about a divinity from this mythology. One of the astronomers from MAST had produced a list of the names of the planets of the solar system along with a brief narrative to describe the relationship between the planets and the mythical entities after whom they were named. While the questions were simple, they still caused some controversy. After the visitors had given their responses, a PowerPoint presentation was given about each planet and its corresponding mythological history. During the discussion, many other parallel questions came up, and it is not surprising that astronomy generally excites people's imagination.

When we analysed the responses to visitor questionnaires about the content of the CD-ROM we came across mixed results. Some teachers appreciated the sequence of the theories presented alongside the images and said that they planned on investigating the subject further themselves. They also said they wished they had touched upon these issues with their students before bringing them to the museum. Others were more interested in the content of the narratives and wanted to learn more so that they could relay the information to their students. Some others, on the other hand, did not appreciate or understand the idea behind not associating the images with the sounds[24] - for example *'the pictures had nothing to do with the narratives,* or *the indigenous music is boring'*. Students between the ages of 12 and 14 seemed to be the ones who mostly enjoyed the general context of the activities. Some said they had really appreciated the images, drawings[25] and the way the origin of the universe was explained. Others in the same age group preferred the images of the stars. Some students, when asked which cosmological theory they thought was most interesting, replied '*the Tukâno one*'.

The gallery supervisors in the exhibition space observed that 7th and 8th grade students showed considerable interest in the Graeco-Roman mythology, and some students (mostly between the ages of 13-14) demonstrated that they had some previous interest in, and knowledge of, this subject. The opposite occurred with the older high school students who showed very little interest in the exhibit or in the questions, with the result that there was little participation by those in this group. Their responses proved that the activities planned, and the methodology used, were not stimulating and interesting enough to capture the attention and interest of these older students. To paraphrase Paulo Freire, we would say that what we offered was not sufficiently significant for those visitors: we did not manage to engage them in the theme or in its further development.

The final activity within the planned programme consisted of a cycle of debates in which specialists discussed themes related to cosmological theories and intangible heritage. Having a more specific theme, these attracted a smaller, more specialised, audience, but heated debates resulted. In response the museum's researchers and other participating institutions proposed a continuing dialogue on the issues raised, giving rise to new scientific partnerships.

When planning for MAST's future exhibits, and taking into account the feedback from the 2004 programme about the intangible heritage and cosmology, the public's reaction has encouraged us to reflect on our presentation as an educational project and product. After an internal debriefing and review, we realised, for example, that, contrary to our expectations, our chosen primary focus on 'local colour' (such as keeping narratives in their native languages, with or without translation) in fact proved to be misleading. Our deliberately non-hierarchical and non-linear narrative was intended to serve as a means to question the visitor's preconceived knowledge, but in fact it seemed that the audience did not fully understand the content of the exhibit as it was designed. Hence this approach made the overall understanding of our chosen theme and its presentation even more difficult for the general visitor.





Figure 9
Part of the Dark Room (Cosmocentric System) exhibition, showing some Zodiac constellations

Figure 10
Part of the White Room (Geocentric System). The frieze above shows paintings of the planetary system as it was understood in the Middle Ages, while below there are paintings of the seasons and monthly activities, (all reproduced from illustrations in the Les tres riches heures du Duc de Berry)

Educational Context

As previously stated, we had wanted to present our material in a non-linear, non-hierarchical form as a means of questioning, or even better, challenging, the supremacy of traditional teaching methods in order to show that, in epistemological terms, one culture or one type of knowledge does not invalidate any other one. With this presentational strategy, we had hoped that the audience would be able to avoid sterile cultural comparisons. However, as we pointed out earlier, this general expectation was not entirely fulfilled.

The main reason for this concerns the institutionalization of a mental model which is partially based on a general assumption, which is repeatedly reinforced by school textbooks and by the media, that the universe is homogeneous, and this gives rise to a legitimising discourse that is based on the authority and competence of science, the objective of which is to safeguard the mathematical modelling of the universe as rational, analysable and classifiable.[26] In respect of the interpretative approach of our project - particularly the type of teaching methods used in the museum - we followed, although not explicitly, some of the educational theory of the Brazilian educator and philosopher of education, Paulo Freire (1921-1997),[27] which contrasts strongly with traditional teaching methods. This reflected the relationship between MAST and the formal education network (both public and private). Statistically, 60% of MAST's visitors are students, so these are the main target of MAST's exhibits. This approach is reinforced by the fact that MAST is an international specialist in science educational programmes in informal spaces and therefore seeks to explore the possibilities and limits of less formal science education.[28]

Drawing on a wide range of sources and influences, from Plato, Rousseau, Dewey and Alfred North Whitehead, through Marxism and modern anti-colonialist thought, Freire criticised what he termed 'banking' approaches to education, in which he claimed the student's mind is regarded as little more than an empty space waiting to be filled by the teacher. He also rejected the traditional student/teacher divide, and instead argued for a truly democratic form of education, in which it is necessary to aim for a reciprocal teacher-student and a student-teacher relationship, with a classroom interaction and participation based on the teacher and the student learning from each other. The educational process, Freire argued, should therefore be a means for self-liberation, allowing individuals to establish a critical dialogue with what is transmitted to them, as a prerequisite to a conscientious and committed understanding of reality.

In order to be effective and significant, in this sort of learning the individuals - in our case the student-visitors -, have to contribute themselves to the process, using their own prior knowledge. Consequently, this calls for an exhibition concept and educational process which are based on problem-solving and which draw on existing scientific and socio-historical knowledge and avoid





Figure 11
Interactive exhibit in the Astronomy exhibition showing the sky as seen from the southern hemisphere

Figure 12
The starting point of the outdoor exhibition on the Solar System



Figure 13
Students studying the unit on the Sun in the outdoor exhibition

sectarianism, while regarding a critical consciousness as an educational precondition that enables us to grasp our socio-historic reality in order to demystify it.

The design of the exhibit was therefore intended to simultaneously (1) provoke the visitors' mental models regarding science and its relations to other spiritual fields, (2) lead to new forms of understanding as a means to individual improvement, and (3) in relation to the presentations of the two traditional cosmologies, to stimulate discussion about the treatment of the Brazilian Indian nations, especially in school textbooks, in order to reverse the biased image which has traditionally been presented of these peoples.

Few Objects, Endless Implications

As mentioned earlier, the various categories of visitors responded to the activities to which they were exposed in different ways. Those still in formal education were the main target audience of the activities that took place in the Dark Room. The same goal motivated the didactic discussions we called *Myths of the Solar System*. While a qualitative analysis of the Dark Room activity was only possible after examining individual questionnaire responses after the visit, within the public debates there was a great deal of interaction, so we could see immediately whether or not our proposal had been successful.

The cosmological theories theme in the Dark Room had only a partial approval rate from the visitors. On the positive side the sequence of the narratives (Biblical, *Guarani*, Academic/Scientific and *Tukâno*), and their random visual and sound representations (meaning that there was no obvious or immediate connection between the narratives and the audiovisual effects), certainly had the impact which we had hoped for. In general, the public reacted somewhat awkwardly to what was shown to them. However, at the same time the typical reaction supported our supposition that the most commonly used model of knowledge communication, regularly encountered in schools, tends to present knowledge in a uniform manner, and acts as a mechanism to erase those variations and differences which are in fact central to reality. We had deliberately arranged the exhibit so that the images did not correspond to the sounds (narrative and music), and observed that visitors who were unfamiliar with, or had not previously been exposed to, this type of presentation had much more difficulty in understanding the content.

However, the interest that the four contrasting cosmologies project generated overall in the general audience suggests that MAST could continue with to explore this theme. There are other indigenous cosmologies across Brazil that deserve further investigation, and which would certainly provide interesting information, not only increasing our knowledge of different approaches to cosmology, but would also allow us to have a better understanding of the general cultural development of Brazil as a nation, and, in particular, of the history of the development of science. MAST's new long term exhibit, which is now in the planning stage, will also deal with aspects of archaeo-astronomic evidence in Brazil, and with some ethno-astronomic systems as well.

In conclusion, we evaluated the experience as having been a successful one overall, despite the somewhat negative responses to some aspects of it. We were particularly pleased that the very experimental and risky non-hierarchic presentation of cosmological myths in the Dark Room, together with the audiovisual effects and the presentation we had created, had the impact we had intended. The approach often provoked some initial discomfort among many of the visitors and led to further questioning. We believe that having initially shaken up both students and teachers by challenging their confidence in both their existing preconceptions about traditional knowledge, the exhibition achieved one of its purposes in questioning traditional approaches, not only to cosmology but to the way the subject is taught in schools.

MAST's experiment in presenting the intangible heritage in terms of cosmological traditions was both theoretically and practically stimulating. The intangible heritage is in fact quite difficult to present in exhibition terms. In this case there was no established formula or museographic pattern to follow, but each new attempt of this kind will certainly lead to our finding new approaches and new ways to reduce intangible heritage to some sort of narrative form. Insofar as scientific statements are not entirely reliable, the same may be said about intangible heritage. According to John Ziman, there is nothing in the human cognitive apparatus that can protect us from making mistakes or from uncertainty.[29] Final results, as it seems, often, if not always, fall short of the designer's and/or the audience's expectations.

Another lesson we all learned from these activities was that while throughout the course of history several questions repeat themselves, they endlessly present new and challenging responses within different strands of meaning. There is some consolation in this: we need to realise that however many questions we ask about the existence and nature of the Universe, and the more answers emerge, there will always be an infinity of new questions that will remain unanswered.

NOTES

1. Valente, M.E. 2005. O museu de ciencia: espaco da Historia da Ciencia. *Ciência e Eduçãco*, 11.1, pp. 53-62.
2. UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, Paris, 17 October 2003. Article 2: Definitions: para. 2(d).
3. Instituto do Patrimonio Historico e Artistico Nacional (Brasil), 2004. *Cartas Patrimoniais*, Rio de Janeiro, IPHAN.
4. Boylan, P.J. 2006. The intangible heritage: a challenge and an opportunity for museums and museums professional training. *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*, 1, pp. 53-65.
5. Novello, M. 2006. *O que e cosmologia? A revolucao do pensamento cosmologico,* Rio de Janeiro, Jorge Zahar.
6. Sanches, M.A. 2006. Uma perspectiva mitologica. *Scientific American Brasil*, special issue on Historia - O homem em busca das origens, 7 (2006) , pp. 9-15.
7. The *Guarani* Indians are distributed across six states in Brazil and there are about 34,000 Guarani living in the Brazilian territory. The *Tekoa Itatim* (Village of the White Stone), where we performed our recording, is near the historical city of Paraty, in Rio de Janeiro. We thank all the *Guarani,* especially Professor Nhamandu Vera Mirim, who contributed to the success of our work. For further information on *Guarani* myth-cosmology see Borges, L.C. 1999. *A fala instituinte do discurso mitico guarani mbyá*. PhD Thesis: Programa de Pos-Graduacao em Linguistica/Instituto de Estudos da Linguagem, Unicamp, Campinas.
8. The Uaupes River runs across the northwest area of the State of Amazon and is part of the Rio Negro cultural zone. The *Tukâno* myth-cosmology is based on the divine power of transformation: the smoke of the pipe is transformed into the cosmos, as well as the invisible beings who turn into ethnic groups. Doethyro Tukano was employee at the Indian Museum, to whom we are very grateful. There about 4,000 Tukano individuals living in Brazil. According to FUNAI (Fundacao Nacional do Indio, the Federal Brazilian agency for Indian affairs) there are about 225 different Indian societies and a little more than 180 different languages in Brazil for an indigenous population of about 600,000 people. For further information on the ethnic groups and the indigenous Brazilian languages and knowledge, see, among others, Cunha, M.C. da (editor), 1992. *História dos indios no Brasil*, Sao Paulo, Companhia das Letras/Secretaria Municipal de Cultura/Fapesp; Ribeiro, B. 'Os indios das aguas pretas' in Kumu, U.P and Kenhiri, T. 1980. *Antes o mundo não existia*, Sao Paulo, Livraria Cultura Ed., pp. 7-46; Ribeiro, D. 1986. *Os índios e a civilização*, Petropolis, Vozes; Rodrigues, A.D.'I. 1986. *Línguas brasileiras. Para o conhecimento das línguas indígenas*, Sao Paulo, Loyola and Museu do Indio/Funai, 2005. *Vocabulário Básico de Línguas Indígenas do Brasil*, (CD-Rom); Borges, L.C. and Gondim, L. 2003. *O saber no mito*. Conhecimento e inventividade indigenas, Rio de Janeiro, Teatral Ed.
9. The 'Big Bang' theory was narrated by Henrique Lins de Barros, physicist and researcher at the Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Fisicas/CBPF (Brazilian Centre for Research in Physics). The Bible narrative was recorded by Lucia Lino, librarian at MAST. We are grateful for their kind cooperation.
10. Novello, op. cit. (see note 5) p. 119.
11. We wish to thank our colleagues at MAST Lucy Mary Guimaraes, who produced the CD-ROM, and Jose Ferreira, who edited the sound track and, during the event, operated the playback equipment in the Dark Room.
12. Since those three fields produce myth-cosmologies, the differentiation among them is merely formal and didactic. The reason why we decided to present them separately was due to our intention to show that they are all connected to the endless human speculation about the origin of all that exists.

13. Abreu, R. A emergencia do patrimonio genetico e a nova configuracao no campo do patrimonio in Abreu, R. and Chagas, M. (editors), 2003. *Memória e patrimônio: ensaios contemporâneos*, Rio de Janeiro, DP&A Editora Ltda, pp. 30-45.
14. Chagas, M. O pai de macunaima e o patrimonio espiritual in Abreu, R.and Chagas, M. (editors), 2003. op. cit. pp. 95-108.
15. Boylan, op. cit. (see note 4 above).
16. Valente, op. cit. (see note 1 above), p. 55.
17. Oliven, R.J. Patrimonio intangivel: consideracoes inicais in Abreu, R.and Chagas, M. 2003. op. cit. pp. 77-80.
18. Castoriadis, C. A psicanalise, projeto e elucidacao, in Castoriadis, C. 1987. *As encruzilhadas do labirinto/1*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, pp. 70-131.
19. Boylan, op. cit. (see note 4 above), p. 62.
20. Novello, op. cit. For more information see also Martins, R. de A. 2005. *O universo. Teorias sobre sua origem e evolução,* Campinas, Unicamp. Available at (http://www.ifi.unicamp.br/~ghtc/Universo/html). Accessed (15/04/2007); and Veneziano, G. 2004. O enigma sobre o inicio do tempo. *Scientific American Brasil*, 3.25, pp. 40-49.
21. Novello, op. cit., p. 60.
22. Bourdieu, P. O campo cientifico in Ortiz, R. (editor), 1983. *Pierre Bourdieu: sociologia*, São Paulo, Ática, (Grandes cientistas sociais, 39); Bourdieu, P. 2003. A economia das trocas simbolicas, Sao Paulo, Perspectiva; Bourdieu, P. 2004. *Os usos sociais da ciencia. Por uma sociologia do campo científico*, Sao Paulo, Unesp.
23. See for example Borges, L.C. 2004. De teoria a mito: competencia e legitimacao cientificas in XI *Encontro Regional de História da ANPUH-RJ - Democracia e Conflito*, Rio de Janeiro, ANPUH-RJ/UERJ, pp. 53-54.
24. The sound track consisted of a mixture of music, chants and diverse spontaneous utterances.
25. A great many of the images were displayed on the CD-ROM, but only the drawings were made by the Indians.
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27. Freire, P. 1983. *Educação e mudanca*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra; Freire, P. 1985. *Educação como pratica da liberdade,* Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra; and Freire, P. 1987. *Pedagogia do oprimido*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra.
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Preserving Intangible Heritage in Japan: the Role of the *Iemoto* System

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Preserving Intangible Heritage in Japan: the Role of the *Iemoto* System

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ABSTRACT

Many forms of Japan's intangible heritage, including its three 'Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity', are headed by hereditary masters called *iemoto*. This paper examines the *iemoto* system as it relates to the exclusive rights of the *iemoto*. Through case studies taken mainly from the traditions of the tea ceremony, *Nōgaku*, and *Kabuki*, the state of Japanese art traditions under the said system is also discussed. Although the *iemoto* system is shown to be authoritarian in various ways, it has also played a crucial role in the preservation of intangible heritage in Japan.

Introduction

In early May 2007, many of Japan's national and regional newspapers carried news that was startling to practitioners of *Chadō*, the Japanese 'Way of Tea,' otherwise known as the tea ceremony. The head of the Urasenke school, the largest and most extensive of the three main schools of Tea[1], announced a new form of tea service, where both host and guest(s) may sit cross-legged, on a carpeted space or on the more traditional *tatami*[2] in a tearoom [Figure 1]. Those acquainted with the Way of Tea may have seen tea gatherings held in stark and staid tearooms, where everybody sits in *seiza*, the formal Japanese style of sitting, with the lower legs neatly tucked under the thighs. Other gatherings feature the host and guests seated on more conventional, European-style benches or stools, in front of low tables [Figure 2]. However, the new type of tea service introduced in May, named *Zarei*, was unusual not only because of the leg positions, but also because it required the use of low tables, the tallest of which was a mere 18 centimeters high; news photos also showed both host and guest wearing pants and unbuttoned dress shirts, instead of the usual kimonos, perhaps to better show the newly approved style of sitting.

In explaining the new style, Zabōsai, the 16th-generation head of Urasenke, said that some people are more at ease when sitting cross-legged instead of *seiza*, and emphasized the importance of a relaxed mood in the tea ceremony. Reactions from media and the general public, including Way of Tea practitioners, ranged from amusement to amazement. Many comments were posted on blogs and websites, saying

that recent changes in tea ceremony styles were a cause for concern, for example, or that women would probably have problems with crossing their legs in the new style. Several news articles, however, carried comments informing readers that the tea ceremony style of serving tea using chairs and tables, called *Ryūrei*, was itself an innovation introduced by Gengensai, Zabōsai's ancestor and the 11th-generation head of Urasenke. The information probably came from the Urasenke school itself during its press conference for *Zarei*, but it brought attention to a historical note, when Gengensai first 'invented' the use of chairs and tables to enable foreigners visiting Kyoto during the international 1872 Kyoto Exposition to enjoy tea without having to sit in the formal, and sometimes painful, Japanese way. In many tea gatherings held in Japan and abroad today, the *Ryūrei* form is used frequently, with hardly any thought, much less comment, from organisers or participants about the style's 'non-Japaneseness' or unorthodoxy.

The present Urasenke head has also introduced other styles and utensils to the tea ceremony in recent years, including a compact *Ryūrei* set of tea furniture that could alternatively be used as side tables or decorative stands in a modern home. Whether his innovations and inventions will stand the test of time is a question only future tea ceremony practitioners will be able to answer, although if recent history is the judge, they will probably remain. His roles as innovator and inventor, however, are hardly questioned, so that with this recent innovation of sitting style, most reactions questioned the form itself, rather than the authority of its creator.

This innovation in the tea ceremony reflects the inventiveness that defines and characterises tradition in Japan, as in other parts of the world (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Moreover, underlying the roles of innovator and inventor is one other role that is more significant: that as the sole creator, as the only holder of the right to introduce new things or forms to the tradition. This right is his as the recognised head of his tradition, or *iemoto* in Japanese, and is one of several rights that the *iemoto* are deemed to hold.



Figure 1
The traditional type of tea service



Figure 2
The new type of tea service

However, the *iemoto* system, together with the many Japanese cultural traditions that embody it, have endured thus far. In fact, well-known forms of Japanese intangible heritage, including the three UNESCO designated *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* in Japan, namely, *Nōgaku* Theatre (designated 2001), *Ningyō Jōruri Bunraku* Puppet Theatre (designated 2003), and *Kabuki* (designated 2005), were all established under the framework of the *iemoto* system; they also owe their longevity to it.

The historian Nishiyama Matsunosuke (1982a) pioneered research into the *iemoto* system that defines the organisational structure of most of the readily identifiable and recognised cultural traditions of Japan, for example, flower arrangement, many forms of martial arts, the incense ceremony and the tea ceremony, among others. He identified six sets of absolute rights that were monopolised by the *iemoto*, as follows:

> *(1) Right to the techniques of the tradition, such as control and revision of secret techniques, performance rights, repertory, forms/styles, etc.*
> *(2) Right to its teaching, transmission, and certification*
> *(3) Right to expulsion and punishment, etc., of members*
> *(4) Right to costume and stage/professional names, etc*
> *(5) Right to the control of facilities and equipment*
> *(6) Right to monopolise the income arising from the exercise of the above rights (p. 16)*

These are extensive rights, indeed, which led Nishiyama (1982a & 1982b) to call the system 'feudal' as it could also be 'anachronistic.'

In 1975, Francis Hsu also published an anthropological treatise on the *iemoto* system. In his study, he enumerated the characteristics that he considered intrinsic to the *iemoto* system, as based on previous research. There were four: the master-disciple relationship, an interlinking hierarchy, supreme authority of the *iemoto* and the fictional family system (p. 63-68). These main characteristics are all incorporated and find form in the rights of *iemoto* that are discussed above.

This paper will thus introduce the *iemoto* system as it relates to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage in Japan, with reference to the Way of Tea, *Nōgaku* and *Kabuki*. Through a discussion of *iemoto* rights and characteristics as enumerated above, including the history and present state of the said system, this study also seeks to provide hints and points of reflection for considering the issue of the preservation of intangible heritage in general. Implications of the *iemoto* system for other aspects of intangible heritage in Japan, through the example of one such heritage, *Gujo Odori*, are also discussed.

The *Iemoto* System

The term *iemoto* is a combination of two words in Japanese, *ie* meaning 'house or household' and *moto* meaning 'origin or source.' Nishiyama (1982a) traces the initial use of the term to 1757, in Edo-period Japan. From this time in Japanese history, heads of art organisations began to be called *iemoto*, as they represented the house or family that was acknowledged to be the source as well as the keeper of specific art traditions. Ikegami (2005) points out the paternalistic overtone of the term *iemoto*, especially as it refers to the *pater familias* and relates to parental authority and kinship. From the Edo period to the present, the term *iemoto* has referred to the, usually male, hereditary head of the family that represents a tradition; at the same time he is the 'grand master' and sole arbiter of the said tradition, the top of a pyramid of teachers, followers and practitioners.

Yano (1992) identifies the parallels between the *iemoto* system and the traditional Japanese social structure of the *ie*, or household (p. 74). For one thing, both *iemoto* and *ie* systems share similar types of vertical relationships, such as the master-disciple relationship in the tradition that is translated into that of head-successor in the same tradition: in the family the eldest son as chief disciple is the preferred successor. There is also an emphasis in continuity in both *iemoto* and *ie* structures: the role or positional succession enables the disciple eventually to succeed his master. Furthermore, both systems assume that certain emotional ties are shared by members, who also share the ties of obligation that bind the structure together across space and time. Morishita (2006) suggests that this network of relationships corresponds to Pierre Bourdieu's cultural field, where members in the same art tradition share a world with its own autonomous laws. That is, any student of a tradition usually considers members in another part of the country (or elsewhere in the world) as sisters or brothers in the tradition who all belong to the same 'family,' with the *iemoto* as their acknowledged 'father.' Each member acts and is expected to act accordingly, in the ways of the house.

However, Yano (1992) also emphasises one big difference between the *iemoto* and *ie* systems: the different role and position of the wife. Whereas the spouse of the *iemoto* is relegated to a supportive role, the wife in the family structure is revered and is obliged to reproduce members for the organisation (p. 74). Ikegami (2005) also points out another difference: membership in the *iemoto* system is voluntary, since it is the disciples who seek out the masters instead of the other way around, unlike in the biological family where one obviously never chooses the family one is born into.

Among the various cultural traditions in Japan today which have incorporated the *iemoto* system, and which were previously listed in an old 19th-century pamphlet of *iemoto*-type organisations, Moriya (1992, cited in Ikegami, 2005) mentions that the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, the incense ceremony, and *utai*[3] singing particularly represent the system in its fullest form. But how did the *iemoto* system come about? The pioneering work of Nishiyama (1982a & 1982b) is too extensive to be digested here, but the history of *iemoto* may also be sufficiently understood through Ikegami's (2005) brief discussion concerning the autonomy of the arts that developed through the *iemoto* system.

In the Edo period (1603-1868), particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries, the arts and literature of Japan *followed a distinctive path of development* (p. 163). That is, until then many of Japan's cultural forms enjoyed the exclusive patronage of the elite and the rulers of the country, but due to the emergence of a progressively more affluent audience and a mass market that could provide financial support, experts were able to establish schools where they could earn a living independent of patrons, that is, on their recruitment and instruction of students alone. The result was a conglomeration of *shared aesthetic universes* (p. 163) of professionals around which gathered audiences and aspiring students who held the same convictions concerning the particular art tradition. It was in this atmosphere that the *iemoto*-type of teaching method was developed, in which a master at the top tier would hold together a hierarchy of professionals, semi-professionals, and amateurs; this method Ikegami calls an *intelligent adaptation of those arts of the newly expanding art instruction market by utilizing some idioms of feudalistic authority* (p. 163).

Other types of teaching also emerged, but it was the master-disciple method of the *iemoto* system that became entrenched in many of Japan's art and cultural traditions and remained strong: the 'true' lineage represented by the *iemoto* and his followers, as well as the standard curriculum, appealed to new entrants to the tradition, as explained below. As the *iemoto* gained power in accordance with the exclusive rights that he came to monopolise, the continuity of traditions - intangible heritage - was assured. *Kabuki* actor and author, Nakamura Matazō, mentions that the 600-year-old *Nōgaku* repertory and the 400-year-old traditions in *Kabuki* have been preserved and refined precisely because of the *iemoto* system (p. 38). A discussion of the *iemoto*'s monopoly of rights as enumerated above will give a clearer view of the role of the *iemoto* system in relation to the survival of traditions as they function today, as well as explaining some of the implications concerning issues of intangible heritage preservation in general.

The Rights of *Iemoto*

The right to the techniques of the tradition.

This right is powerfully illustrated in the tea ceremony innovations involving cross-legged and chair-seating styles as mentioned in the Introduction, as both styles gained acceptance only after sanction from the *iemoto* himself. In the *iemoto* system, there is no room for deviation (Yano, 1992), and access to the most advanced and secret techniques is restricted (Yano, 1992; Bodiford, 2002; Rath, 2004). This does not mean non-advancement for the practitioner, however, as students normally rise through the ranks the longer they receive training and instruction in their particular art tradition. Each level is defined within more or less clear parameters, and the student normally progresses to a subsequent, higher level of advancement. The clear parameters are, in fact, set standards for the techniques in the tradition. Standardisation of the curriculum was necessary in the development of the tradition, as explained by Rath (2004), citing Larson (1977): *The standardization or codification of knowledge is the basis on which a professional 'commodity' can be made distinct and recognizable to the potential publics* (p. 247).

However, the authority wielded by the particular tradition's keepers, especially in terms of control and standardisation of techniques, made it necessary to emphasise the 'true' lineage of the tradition (Ikegami, 2005), that is, a basis for the authority had to be firmly delineated. Hence, the emphasis on heredity. Descent

from a tradition's great patriarch gave the main family the right to its 'true' practice, as well as to secret knowledge that it could withhold or divulge to a select few at will. In other words, there was a need to prove the source of the *iemoto*'s authority, and this was conveniently fulfilled through the matter of bloodline. Throughout the history of the Way of Tea, almost all of the hereditary successors from the 17th century to the present, in the three main schools, have been eldest sons; they all trace their lineage to the legendary founder, Sen Rikyū (1522-1591). Similar phenomena occur in *Nōgaku, Kabuki*, flower arrangement and in the other traditions.

Although the hereditary succession inherent in the *iemoto* system has been criticised in many instances - such as in occasional cases when incompetent eldest sons inherited the family tradition - Nakamura (1990), citing the situation of *Kabuki* actors who are also potential heirs to the family tradition, says that some children of the major actors *possess abilities ordinary people do not have - because since birth they have breathed the air of the kabuki world as though it were the most natural thing in the world* (p. 44). He adds that he has seen the difference between such heirs and other performers with his own eyes.[4]

The right to the teaching, transmission, and certification.

Nishiyama (1982a) refers to this right, particularly that concerning certification, as the main difference between the *iemoto* method in the Edo period and its previous counterparts. Since the certification or licensing of teachers was limited and the curricula extensively standardised, quality control was made possible, and 'brands' came to be built. Ikegami (2005) likens this development to the modern restaurant franchise, whereby the *iemoto* as the main franchise owner hands out licenses for the operation of branches to teach the art or practice to set rules and standards.

The certification system did resolve the dilemma concerning the marketing of the tradition, as in the case of *Nōgaku* (Rath, 2004): the standard curriculum helped to attract students and sustain their interest. At the same time, the certified schools were empowered, equipping them with the authority and the means to disseminate knowledge, in some instances including secret techniques. More importantly, certificates became a steady and huge source of income, as these were, and still are today, sold to students who received the appropriate level of training and who could afford to pay for them.

The right to expulsion and punishment of members.

In the introduction to Rath's (2004) work on *Nōgaku*, he tells the story of Takabayashi Ginji, a *Nō* actor who, in Takabayashi's own words, was *dealt a death sentence - prevented from taking the stage and prohibited from interacting with other performers* (p. 2). His punishment came after the actor was said to have made 'impertinent' and offensive claims on the *Kita school of Nōgaku* and the family of its *iemoto*. This happened half a century ago, in 1956. Although today reports of the expulsion of members from traditional art organisations in Japan are rare, the widely-reported controversy surrounding Izumi Motoya, self-acknowledged *sōke* (*iemoto*)[5] of the Izumi branch of *kyōgen* (comedic play in *Nōgaku*), deserves a brief mention.

Motoya assumed the *sōke* title in a naming ceremony hastily arranged just before his father Motohide, the 19th-generation *sōke* passed away in 1995. Motoya was then only 20 years old, but had been receiving extensive training in the *Izumi* acting repertoire since he was three years old. Motoya's assumption of the title, however, was not sanctioned by the *Nōgaku Sōke Kai* (Association of *Nōgaku Sōke*), and was opposed by almost all its members, who declared that Motoya's technique was not developed enough, owing to his relative youth. In turn, Motoya, with his mother's public support, insisted on his right to the title. The controversy dragged on for several years until in 2002, after Motoya was reported to have reneged on his performance commitments, among other problems, the *Nōgaku Sōke Kai* moved to have his name (and his family's branch) removed from the Association. At present (2007), Izumi Motoya continues to use the *sōke* title, while the *Nōgaku Sōke Kai*, as well as the powerful Nōgaku Kyōkai (association for the major schools of *Nōgaku* in Japan), refuse to support and recognise his work.

The right to costume and stage/professional names.

In *Kabuki* and *Nōgaku*, for example, actors inherit family and first names that are passed through the generations, such as the Nakamura, Ichikawa, and Kanze, names that are familiar today. In the Way of Tea, the hereditary heir takes on the Sen name, while the school itself, under the *iemoto*'s authority, grants *chamei*, or 'tea names,' to the duly recognised and accomplished practitioners of the tradition. The tea name is normally a combination of the character for 'sō'[6] indicating membership of the main house, and one or

two characters that are used in the practitioner's legal name. In Japanese traditional music and dance schools there is the *natori*, or 'name-taking' ceremony, whereby a disciple who has been recognised by his or her master for mastery of the tradition is conferred a rank and a name in accordance with the level of accomplishment. Yano (1992) describes the *natori* as a *symbolic shift away from the natal family to the professional family to theparalleling other rituals of inviolable ties, such as weddings* (p. 76).

These are but a few examples of the naming tradition in *iemoto*-style cultural forms in Japan. They each imply, however, the creation of a 'mythic family' (p. 75) for the recipient of the name, as well as the significant option of an alternative identity through which he or she *temporarily becomes* [an] *individual* [artist] *with social recognition* (Ikegami, 2005: p. 169). The new name actually reinforces the quasi-familial relationship to the *iemoto* line, as well as the image of the *iemoto* as parent. Ikegami (2005) further observes that the use of familial terms and ideology in organisations that are not based on kinship frequently emerges in social organisation patterns in Japan. They serve as a *ritual technology for enhancing cohesion and esprit de corps of a group* (p. 169). In fact, Nishiyama (1982a & 1982b) draws parallels with several such units in Japanese society, naming organisations as diverse as university laboratories and religious groups. Hsu (1975) particularly pointed out an *iemoto* pattern in Japanese religion.

The right to the control of facilities and equipment.

This right is closely related to the first right concerning the techniques of the tradition. Its practice is illustrated in the example of the new style of serving tea above, with the use of furniture specifically developed for the said style.

The right to monopolise income.

Art traditions such as the tea ceremony and flower arrangement attract students by the million in Japan. Owing to their tight organisation, all of the schools and instructors under these art traditions' umbrellas pay royalties and license fees to the main organisation centered on the *iemoto*. Even the performing arts of *Kabuki* and *Nōgaku* are said to depend on the revenues earned from the ranks of their amateur students (Rath, 2004), which are in turn used to support the schools run by the *iemoto*. However, there seems to be a general consensus that all of the schools in these different art traditions are run like commercial enterprises (Yano, 1992; Rath, 2004; et al): certificates, ranks and names are granted, but with steep fees; the schools' products and equipment are licensed and sold only in authorised shops, while some organisations own publishing houses that regularly release training manuals and books for sale to the general public, among other business endeavours.

Any discussion of the rights of the *iemoto* prompts accusations of authoritarianism and autocracy in the system, not to mention nepotism. Indeed, these rights are not only exclusive, but also absolute, so the charges are unfounded. Morishita (2006), citing Maruyama (1996), correlates the power of the *iemoto* with that of the Emperor in modern Japanese history, especially since each occupies a unique position that is not based on his quality, but rather on patriarchal lineage. Moreover, both are considered infallible and have been deified: the *iemoto* is not merely a protector of tradition, but more so, *divinity embodying omnipotent power and eternal tradition* (Morishita, 2006).

The supposedly divine authority of the *iemoto*, however, is tied to notions of achievement, as the *iemoto* is presumed to be the supreme practitioner of his tradition, the ideal to which everyone aspires. In the performance arts, including *Nōgaku* and *Kabuki* where skill is on view and easily judged, the *iemoto* could be said to be in a precarious position, as he must at least possess the same level of technique as any other student, professional or amateur. *Nōgaku, Kabuki*, and the other performing arts take care of potential repercussions by exercising the rights exclusive to *iemoto*: certain - usually the most important - roles are limited to *iemoto*, for example. No comparison is then possible as there are no other performers acting the same role anywhere else.

The situation is different in the other art forms such as the tea ceremony and flower arrangement. Since dexterity is less easy to judge - there can only be so many ways of whisking tea or inserting flowers in a container - so that limited access to certain practices holds greater significance. The Way of Tea, for example, has certain tea serving styles that are never printed in textbooks, neither are they shown publicly except in small and limited groups of senior and advanced practitioners.

Not all is authoritarian, however. As Yano (1992) pointed out, there is in fact more democratisation in the *iemoto* system than in similar art traditions in the West.

Anyone who enters an art tradition in Japan is deemed artistically inclined and educable, and the longer one studies, the higher one climbs up the rungs of the achievement ladder. Everyone starts as an amateur, in other words. (One must realise, however, that the length of study and rank can also depend on the student's ability to pay for the lessons and for the certificates.) The fact that membership in the system is voluntary is another important point: the student, by choosing his or her school and teacher, has chosen to submit to the rules of the game, and therefore, to the rule of the *iemoto* and his tradition's laws.

Granting that the system could be described as authoritarian, a careful study of the history of each art tradition will reveal that it was this authoritarianism that prevented those traditions from being wiped out (Nakamura, 1988/1990; Rath, 2004; Ikegami, 2005; et al). A dictatorial hold on the tradition, coupled with a deified form of authority, ensured the continuity of practices in the tradition that were not challenged for authenticity - if they were challenged at all the accuser risked expulsion. In any case, accusations of the lack of democracy in the *iemoto* system may be misplaced, since it is a system that is characterised and was developed exactly from a legacy in which democracy played little part.

Implications

The *iemoto* system appears in several variations, not only in the traditions described above, but in other cultural traditions in Japan. In this author's study of a festival, *Gujo Odori* in Gifu Prefecture, he has found characteristics in its system that are parallel to those already discussed [figure 3].

Gujo Odori is an annual summer *bon* [festival for the dead] dance festival held during a two-month period in Hachiman town, Gujo City, Gifu. From July to September, around 30 days of dancing are scheduled on dates that are deemed auspicious, including four days of all night-dancing, *tetsuya odori*, that is held on four nights from the 13th to the 16th of August. *Tetsuya odori* coincides with Japan's *bon* season, and is the peak of *Gujo Odori* (Cang, 2007).

In the festival season, an average of 300,000 visitors (*Gujo odori hina-re*, 2007, 1) comes to Hachiman (population less than 17,000). It is a considerable source of revenue for the town. Many come to join in the dancing, as it is open to all regardless of age or sex. The dancing crowd forms a huge circle around the *yakata* [raised stage], on which *taiko* [Japanese drum], *fue* [Japanese flute], and *shamisen* [three-stringed Japanese guitar] players and singers sit and perform the music of the *Gujo Odori*.

Official publications, government pamphlets and websites that introduce *Gujo Odori* all refer to its 400-year history. These accounts attribute the origin of the dance to Endō Yoshitaka, castle lord of Hachiman in the 1590s, who was said to have ordered the town residents to perform dances to celebrate victory in war, or to unify the different social classes - the reasons vary.

Gujo Odori, however, was not formally named until 1923, when the *Gujo Odori Hozonkai* [*Gujo Odori* preservation group] (*Hozonkai* below) was formed. This preservation group took its name from the dance



Figure 3
Gujo Odori in Gifu

performed in 1914, *Gujo kyokka no miyoshi no*, during the opening of the Hachiman town hall. *Hozonkai* subsequently incorporated this dance and recreated other songs and dances that were considered indigenous to the region, developed and then formalised these into the *Gujo Odori* repertoire. At present there are ten song-dances in *Gujo Odori*. Its most representative dance, *Kawasaki*, was newly created in 1914, and is a collaborative effort between the then town mayor of Hachiman and a teacher in the Nishikawa school of traditional dance in the Gujo area.

The *yakata* stage is also an innovation. Although it is the most recognisable and central element of *Gujo Odori*, it is a rebuilt structure and was incorporated as a regular component of the festival only around 1953. Before the *yakata* occupied this central role in the festival, anyone with a clear singing voice could sing the songs of *Gujo Odori*, and people would spontaneously form rings around the singer and dance to the song. The yakata was introduced because of the influx of tourists (Adachi, 2004). As the popularity of *Gujo Odori* spread and visitors came in droves, the *Hozonkai* decided to control the crowds by limiting the dancing to music that henceforth would come only from the *yakata*.

The stage in effect standardised the music, as well as limited its performance only to members of the *Hozonkai*. Today, only *Hozonkai* members play and sing the songs of *Gujo Odori* - officially, that is. The dancing, too, has been standardised. Aside from public demonstrations in places such as the town museum, each dancing night during festival season, *Hozonkai* members perform the dances for participants to follow. (The *Hozonkai* are readily identifiable as they are the only ones who wear the official costume, a *yukata* or summer kimono that is decorated with symbols[7] associated with the history of Hachiman. The *yukata* became official *Hozonkai* wear only in the 1950s, although its symbols are a few hundred years old.)

After one hour or so of the *Hozonkai*'s performances, the members go around the dancing crowd and choose about 15 people to receive certificates, called *menkyojo* [licenses], attesting to their 'expertise' (Cang 2007). These certificates are coveted - they are proudly displayed in homes and shops not only in Hachiman, but also in the neighbouring areas and prefectures. They are also announced on public and private websites, and in personal blogs. The main consideration for the certificates is the faithfulness that the dancers show according to the form demonstrated by the *Hozonkai*.

The music and dancing are taught in private classes, too, although the number of students is very limited; it is one-to-one teaching, in fact. This is the teaching style in Japanese tradition that is known as *isshi sōden*, literally 'to one child all inheritance,' which means the transmission of all learning by one teacher to only one disciple or heir. It is this exclusive style of teaching that led Adachi (2004) to explore the development of *Gujo Odori* as *iemotoka* [transformation into *iemoto*] in his research.

The teaching style is not the only *iemoto*-like aspect of *Gujo Odori*, however. The means by which the *Hozonkai* has created the song-dances and defined its central elements - their absolute rights over the tradition - as well as their monopoly over the costume and certification, among others, are characteristic of the *iemoto* system.

One main difference is in the matter of lineage. As many leaders of traditions in Japan today have descended from their founders through bloodline, their authority as the main conduit of the tradition is acknowledged and accepted, if sometimes grudgingly. Unlike these *iemoto* systems, the *Hozonkai* for *Gujo Odori* do not have a familial lineage that could function as a source of legitimacy. In this situation, however, they have a convenient and powerful substitute: the Japanese government in its role as *pater familias*. This is due to *Gujo Odori*'s recognition as 'official heritage', since it has been designated by the national government as an *Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Property* since 1996. The designation is what one Hozonkai member has referred to as *osumi tsuki*, or an official seal of approval.

The recognition does not stop at the designation, however. Especially for intangible cultural properties in Japan, particularly those under consideration for designation in the folk-cultural property category, the government first requires that the tradition has holders - one or more *Hozonkai* - who are in charge of their practice and its preservation (Cang, 2007). These holders are then recognised together with their tradition, which may then be designated as official cultural property. This recognition of groups that preserve heritage is tantamount to a government seal of approval, and implies government support for the preservation of a tradition that is in many ways an *iemoto* system except in name.

As of March 2008, there are 252 designated *Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Properties* in Japan, each of which is looked after by one or several legitimised *Hozonkai* and preservation groups. Most likely, these groups have also reinvented and recreated their traditions, and control their

transmission, practice, facilities, costume, etc. as would *iemoto* in other traditions.

Conclusion

In one recent study concerning women's empowerment in the tea ceremony tradition, it was observed that its *iemoto* system was mirrored in Japanese society at large (Kato, 2004). Morishita's (2006) research also draws strong comparisons between early twentieth century avant-garde art in Japan and the *iemoto* system. However, the analogy goes beyond art and cultural traditions, as already mentioned (See Hsu, 1975; Nishiyama, 1982a & 1982b).

In his study, Hsu (1975) did not merely draw an analogy between the *iemoto* system and the social structure of religious organisations. He also directly stated that:

> *It is only necessary to state here that iemoto characteristics are to be found in all aspects of Japanese society, in religion, in business, in schools and universities, in workshops and offices. (p. 69)*

In making this statement, Hsu (1975, 70) was aware of the criticism that he would attract, particularly in what might be seen as his *improper use of the term iemoto*. He defended his position, nonetheless, and used the anthropological standpoint to point out how social science has consistently and successfully used general terms to denote the specific. He gave the example of money, which in some societies would be made of paper or metal, and in others, take the form of cowrie shells or stones. It is the same with the term 'family', which could denote various types of groupings depending on the society in which it is located.

Hsu further stated that:

> *There is no scientifically valid reason for not using the Japanese term iemoto to designate a certain form of human grouping, provided that we clearly delineate its intrinsic characteristics. (1975, p. 70)*

Hsu was clearly referring to the process of referencing the Japanese term *iemoto* to indicate social groups that may not necessarily be Japanese. It must be noted, however, that it would require a rather big stretch of the imagination and considerable intellectual dexterity to identify some social or human groupings as *iemoto* systems - political parties in countries like Taiwan or the United States, for example.

It does not actually take much imagination or intellectual maneouvering to discover parallels between the *iemoto* system and many social groups in Japan. Indeed these similarities become even more obvious in the case of social groups located in the heritage arena, especially those that can be clearly identified as traditions. Such is the case for the *Hozonkai* in *Gujo Odori*, as we have already seen.

By and large, the *iemoto* system has been successful in preserving much of Japan's intangible heritage. In recent efforts to preserve intangible heritage elsewhere, it can serve as a model, or at least a reference. However, its qualities may not appeal to everyone who buys into the system - *caveat emptor*.

NOTES

1. The other two are Omotesenke and Mushanokojisenke.
2. Woven reed mats used in a traditional Japanese room.
3. *Utai* is the generic term for the songs in *Nōgaku* and *Kyōgen* (comedic *Nōgaku*), as well as other related art forms.
4. In describing Matsumoto Koshiro IX, of the notable Matsumoto family of *Kabuki* actors, Nakamura uses the term 'thoroughbred' p. 44.
5. The heads of the different schools in *Nōgaku* are customarily called *sōke* rather than *iemoto*, although both terms are used interchangeably.
6. '*Sō*' is the same character for '*sō*' in '*sōke*,' literally meaning 'main house' (cf. Bodiford, 2002).
7. One symbol, a chrysanthemum crest, is particularly significant, as it is the same crest used by the Aoyama family, one of the richest and most powerful clans that ruled (Gujo) Hachiman in the Edo Period (1603-1868).

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The Importance of Communities being able to Provide Venues for Folk Performances and the Effect : a Japanese Case Study

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The Importance of Communities being able to Provide Venues for Folk Performances and the Effect: a Japanese Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to explain how important it is that performance artists have the opportunity to perform regularly and venues in which to do so. It is a crucial factor in preventing traditional performance arts from dying out. Spectators thus learn to understand, enjoy and appreciate the dances and the music, and it is helpful for the performers to have the sense of importance that they get from performing in public. I use one of the Japanese performing folk arts, *Ishioka-bayashi*, as a case study.

This paper is divided into two sections. Firstly I try to illustrate what Yanagita Kunio describes as 'festivalism' by explaining how relatively minor rituals have developed into full blown festivals. Secondly, I investigate the background of *Ishioka-bayashi*, and how it was created. This particular case study demonstrates what can happen when a group of performers is unable to practice their art.

Introduction

Since the adoption of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage* in October 2003 by the General Conference of UNESCO, there has been increasingly lively discussion about intangible heritage issues and a growing recognition of their great importance, alongside the realisation that in the past the focus has been on the preservation of tangible heritage.[1] In fact, it is difficult to deal with immaterial cultural expressions simply because they are basically human activities, which are mainly collective and collaborative, and not static, but moving, changing and dynamic. It is therefore important to consider the socio-historic and cultural background of the people who are involved; this

does not just mean the environment in which they live, but also the particular situations in which the cultural expressions are enacted[2]. It is therefore necessary to examine individual cases in some detail.

This paper examines one of the Japanese performing folk arts, *Ishioka-bayashi*, as a case study to see what might be required to keep similar intangible cultural expressions alive. Before talking about *Ishioka-bayashi*, I need to describe what Yanagita Kunio calls 'festivalism' and investigate its potential to explain how some traditional Japanese rituals have developed into full blown festivals. This also helps us to understand how some performing arts have grown out of traditional rituals in contemporary Japan. I then examine *Ishioka-bayashi* in some detail, and conclude with some observations about the active preservation of this form of intangible heritage.

Yanagita Kunio's 'Festivalism'

Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), is the most renowned Japanese folklorist and the father of Japanese folklore studies, or Japanese 'native ethnography'.[3] One of his current theories 'festivalism', or *Sairēron*, explains why rituals have developed into festivals. He identifies three key factors; the spectators, gorgeously elaborated artifacts involved in ritual observances (*huryū*), and the size and scale of rituals that involve various sub-events.[4] These three factors, which are inextricably interlinked, stimulate, or have in the past stimulated, the appearance and development of festivals which derive from what were originally small-scale, exclusive, sacred rituals attended by a few devotees. In other words, the scale of ritual observances tends to expand as the number of the spectators increases, even when those rituals are supposed to take place rarely and in secret. Moreover, the people who participate in those rituals are affected by the numbers of spectators; they see their own performance through the spectators' eyes and it makes them more critical of their own efforts.

Then, because they expect an audience, they invent ever more elaborate and lavish artifacts for their rituals, and organise special events to attract even more visitors. 'Festivalism' actually provides some useful criteria with which to examine traditional Japanese festivals, forcing us to see how the three factors described above have affected particular events.[5] It is, however, important to note that the presence of spectators can also lead to the development of some rituals as closed events, for insiders only.[6] The interplay between participants and spectators can have a profound impact on how rituals develop.

Introduction to *Ishioka*

Ishioka is the name of the region where *Ishioka-bayashi* was created and was originally performed, and is administratively Ishioka-shi[7] of Ibaraki prefecture. Ishioka is located about seventy kilometers north-east of central Tokyo, the capital of Japan, and in 2006 there was a total population of 83,091 in its entire area of 21,338 square kilometers.[8] However, it is important to note that this is primarily an administrative district. Ishioka city was formed in 1954 after the amalgamation of Someyamura and Murakamimura into Ishiokachō in 1889, and of Takahamachō and Ishiokachōin 1953, along with the incorporation of Mimura and Sekigawamura into Ishioka-shi in 1954.[9] In 1955 the total population of Ishioka city was approximately 35,000, but it increased steadily from the 1960s to the 1990s due to an influx of new residents. However, the population has remained stable at roughly 53,000 since the late 1990s. It was with

the inclusion of Yasatomachi[10] in 2005 that the population of Ishioka city changed dramatically. Local people do not regard Ishioka-shi as Ishioka. Although Ishioka city includes four villages and two townships, through the various amalgamations, each village and township sees itself as an independent local community, regardless of the administrative changes.[11] The area known as 'Ishioka' generally corresponds to the western part of Japan Railway. Ishioka station, and especially the area situated within roughly one kilometer of the station, is known locally as *machiuchi* or *machinaka* which literally means 'town centre' or the 'inner town'. The area west of the station is the historic centre for the native population of Ishioka, and, by extension, for all residents of the district. The area on the other side of the station is now a large new residential area, built since the 1960s to ease the housing shortage in the historic town centre.

After the Reformation of the Taika Era in 645, the local central government, called the *kokufu*, was established in Ishioka. Along with the establishment of the *kokufu* as the political and administrative centre of *Hitachi-no-kuni*[12], the *Sōsha* shrine was founded in the late 11th century.[13] There are also other historic buildings like the *Kokubun* temple. Legends about the *kokufu* and the other old buildings are still current in Ishioka and the local people, the natives rather than the new residents living in eastern Ishioka, still see their hometown as a place with a long and glorious history. This is important because the local economy has declined drastically because of the rapid economic growth at national level. Ishioka, as the flat basin area surrounding farming villages, was the main local market for rice and other agricultural products from the middle of the Tokugawa period (1603-1867) onwards. Many households in Ishioka made *sake-* and *shōyu* (soy sauce), using the abundant farm produce from the neighbouring villages, and there was also a flourishing brewing industry. Despite its prosperous history, Ishioka has suffered from severe social changes that have come with urbanisation and industrialisation. Many people have moved to the metropolitan cities and the local economy has declined. Nowadays Ishioka presents itself on the official website as an ancient cultural centre with 1300 years of history.

The Background to the Ceremonies

Hayashi and *Ishioka-bayashi*

Ishioka-bayashi is a form of *hayashi* which was created, and is performed, in the Ishioka region. *Hayashi* is a type of Japanese musical performance with an ensemble that usually consists of a flute (*hue*), a gong (*kane*), two small flat drums (*tsuke-daiko*) and a big drum (ō-daiko). They create lively musical rhythms and play on special occasions such as traditional festivals. In Ishioka, this *hayashi* music is played with three types of dance-dramas (*odori*) performed on a wooden festival wagon (*dashi*)[14] (Fig. 1). The first type is danced by a performer wearing an *okame*, or *otahuku* mask, which represents an ugly woman with a flat nose and chubby cheeks (Fig. 2). It is believed that the *okame* brings happiness and good fortune as the name *otahuku* means 'much good fortune.'

The second dance, usually paired with the *okame*, is performed by a dancer wearing the mask of a *hyottoko* - which means a funny-faced man with a pointed mouth (Fig. 3). This distinctive clown's mouth is so shaped because he tries to blow fire through a narrow bamboo tube.[15] These two types of dances are performed very humorously, telling short comic stories, or 'dance-dramas'. Finally, the third type of dance is performed by a dancer who wears the mask of a *kitsune*, or Japanese fox, a creature which often appears in Japanese folk lore (Fig. 4).The *Kitsune* has both benevolent and malicious qualities and is believed to be the messenger of the God





Figure 1
A wooden festival wago, or *dashi*, in front of its shed in Ishioka

Figure 2
Okame dance on a dashi.





Figure 3
Hyottko dance on a dashi.

Figure 4
Kitsune dance on a dashi.

of Rice, who has been transformed into a human being to trick and deceive people. This dance often frightens children because of its scary gestures.

The Sōsha Shrine and *Hitachi-no-kuni Sōshagū Taisai*

Ishioka-bayashi is performed at the local shrine festival of *Hitachi-no-kuni Sōshagō Taisai*,[16] which means 'the main festival at the Hitachi-no-kuni Sōsha shrine', or the *Ishioka no omatsuri* (the Festival of Ishioka)

The Sōsha shrine was originally established to reduce the burden on the governor of the territory in ancient times; he had previously been expected to pay homage at all the local shrines. However, the role of the shrine changed from political to communal as the *kokufu*'s authority weakened - the Sōsha shrine is believed to house the guardian deity of the community.[17] There are a variety of Shinto rituals related to the calendrical system, and traditional seasonal observances, that take place at the shrine.[18] In addition, other ceremonies, like Shinto wedding celebrations, the first celebration to pay homage to the local guardian deity on the 32nd or 33rd day after the birth of a child, special rituals to pray for the safety of a new car, or to ward off the evil spirits when one reaches an inauspicious age, all take place at the shrine from time to time. All of these Shinto ceremonies and rituals are called *matsuri*.[19] The biggest and most popular *matsuri* at the shrine in Ishioka is *Taisai*.

Taisai is held annually on the third Saturday, Sunday, and Monday in September. Since the third Monday in September is a national holiday (*kērō-no-hi* which mean 'Respect for the Aged Day'), the residents are free to participate in *Taisai* and it also attracts a large number of tourists over the three days.[20] The ceremony is in two parts; one is a Shinto ritual held inside the shrine and the other is a festival performed outside the shrine[21] around the local neighbourhood.[22]

The first day is called *shinkōsai* which means that the *mikoshi*, a portable palanquin bearing the guardian deity, is escorted by *dashi* (elaborately carved and decorated wooden wagons on which dancers and musicians perform) and *shishi* (lion dancers who perform with a huge wooden lion's head and a lion's body made from a covered cart) from the shrine to its temporary resting place, called the *okariya*, within the town (Table 1). While the deity resides in

when	where	what
15th September	Sōsha shrine	Shinto ritual at the Sōsha shrine (*rōtaisai*)
The 3rd *Saturday* in Sep.	Sōsha shrine	Shinto ritual at the Sōsha shrine (*shinkōsai*)
	From Sōsha shrine to *Okariya* through the streets of the participating neighbourhoods	Procession of a portable palanquin accompanying a series of *Shishi* and *Dashi*
	the streets of the participating neighbourhoods	Parade and competition of *Shishi* and *Dashi*
The 3rd *Sunday* in Sep.	Sōsha shrine	*Kagura* & *Sumo*
	Okariya	Shinto ritual
	The streets of the participating neighbourhoods	Parade and competition of *Shishi* and *Dashi*
The 3rd *Monday* in Sep.	From Sōsha shrine to *Okariya* through the streets of the participating neighbourhoods	Procession of a portable palanquin accompanying a series of *Shishi* and *Dashi*
	The streets of the participating neighbourhoods	Parade and competition of *Shishi* and *Dashi*
	Sōsha shrine	Shinto ritual of Sōsha shrine (*kankōsai*)

Table1
Schedule and major events of *Taisai*

the *okariya*, to be in touch with its worshippers, the *dashi* and *shishi* move along the streets all day long performing a variety of dances to the tunes of the *Ishioka-bayashi*. On the second day, there is a Shinto ceremony in the *okariya* to invoke the support and blessing of the deity for the neighbourhood and its residents.

Over and above this, *kagura* and *sumo* performances, which are put on for the entertainment of the deity, attract many tourists. But it is the parade and the competition of the *dashi* and *shishi* that most of the locals consider the most spectacular and important part of the festival. This is because most local residents enjoy joining in the action, being an actor, (but less commonly an actress) playing the rhythms, dancing, shouting and yelling in the crowd. There is competition between the various neighbourhoods which makes it all even more exciting. The third day is the day of *kankōsai* when the *mikoshi* is on its way back to the shrine to the accompaniment of the *dashi* and *shishi* (see table 1). In the shrine, the last Shinto ritual is held, to celebrate that the deity is safely back in his shrine.

In addition to this, the management committee of the region (*ujiko-sōdai*) and the representatives of each association, including the Mayor of Ishioka, have a ceremony where they express their great delight that their collaboration has gone well and the festival has been a success. There are speeches and a show of local pride. Even though this ceremony ends at around five in the evening, there are still a great number of locals and spectators out on the streets until midnight. There is an air of festivity and celebration, created by the rhythms and the dances of *Ishioka-bayashi* and by the exuberance of the *shishi* performers, which just stops short of descending into chaos.

Ishioka-bayashi Flourishes, *Taisuke-bayashi* Disappears

Background

Ishioka-bayashi was designated a 'Prefectural Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Property' in 1980.[23] Traditionally this was not one single event in Ishioka, but a number of events were made into one distinctive performance by amalgamating several separate *hayashi* troupes.[24] To understand the background, we should explain who the *hayashi* members are, what they do, and how they come to be involved in *Taisai*.

There are twelve *hayashi* troupes in Ishioka at present, which means there must be twelve *dashi* on which they can perform.[25] As we have seen, Ishioka consists of two main residential districts, which we could call 'Old Ishioka' and 'New Ishioka.'. Although these two districts can be differentiated in various ways, in the context of the festival it is the festive artifacts and performances that distinguish them. 'Old' Ishioka, situated in the west, has *dashi*, while 'New' Ishioka, in the east has *shishi*. Neighbourhood associations, -*chō* or *chōnai* maintain the *dashi* and *shishi*, and each district has their own. However there are some exceptions; two neighbourhoods own only *shishi* and six neighbourhoods in 'Old' Ishioka maintain both *dashi* and *shishi*.[26] It is much more complicated to operate *dashi* in the festival, due to the prohibitive cost and the shortage of manpower. It is said that a *dashi* costs, at the very least, about three to five times as much as a *shishi* in terms of money and manpower. In one way, however, *dashi* are less of a burden than they used to be because of the *hayashi* troupes. In the past there were no *hayashi* troops in Ishioka. Most *hayashi* performers came from the countryside but they were not professionals, they performed for fun at festivals and taught themselves to perform when times were slack on the farms. Ordinary farmers who were interested in this traditional local amusement made a great effort to learn to perform. They were, however, often treated with contempt by their neighbours, because they were regarded as lazy and negligent, men who preferred drinking, singing, dancing and clowning to working the land. And for them, the most exciting and honorable thing was to participate in a large well-known festival like *Taisai* in Ishioka. They would be invited to amuse the townsfolk of Ishioka and warm the festival up by performing *hayashi* on *dashi* owned by the various neighbourhoods within Ishioka city. This system of working *dashi* owned by the townspeople by hiring *hayashi* groups from the countryside, is by no means uncommon in the Kantō area.

Although it is difficult to clarify how many *dashi* existed in eastern, or 'Old' Ishioka it is reasonable to deduce, from an analysis of local newspaper articles, that ten neighbourhoods possessed their own *dashi* by 1931 at the latest. However all ten neighbourhoods could not operate their *dashi* every year, even though they wanted to, because there were not enough *hayashi* troupes to go round. Most of them, therefore, took part in *Taisai* with *shishi*, so there would only be a small number of *dashi* at the festival - probably only two or three as that was the

number of *hayashi* groups in the neighbouring rural area. The most popular and regular troupes were from *Mimura* and *Someyamura*; so they were called *Mimura-bayashi* and *Someya-bayashi* respectively. Although most *hayashi* members were despised by their neighbours in their own villages, they were very welcome guests at the festival. In other words, the townspeople of Ishioka, especially wealthy people who wanted to show how prosperous Ishioka was, needed them to join in the celebrations.[27] Because of this, there was a mad scramble for neighbourhoods to find *hayashi* groups and to establish their own *dashi* in advance of the festival. This kind of competition used to cause friction between districts and destroy the harmony of the town. Moreover, it cost a lot of money to get the *hayashi* to perform during the three days of the festival; the host neighborhood had to pay for their accommodation, food, and travel expenses as well as for the performance itself. But gradually the situation changed.

The creation of *Ishioka-bayashi*

A few young men from the town tried to learn *hayashi* from members of troupes in the countryside. They visited them with bottles of sake to try to persuade them to give lessons in *hayashi*. It is said that at first the farmers were stubborn, and reluctant to share their skills, and it was very hard to persuade them to teach, but after a time they began to enjoy instructing the newcomers. However, they had great difficulty in finding a suitable place for the lessons, especially in the villages where most of the members of the troupes lived. The training itself was noisy and the local residents complained. The groups therefore looked for places outside the villages where the lessons could take place - and they began to use the courtyards of shrines or temples in Ishioka city. The students worked hard and soon they could perform *hayashi* on their own. That meant that some neighbourhoods no longer needed to invite, and pay, *hayashi* from the countryside to operate their *dashi*. Soon many townspeople began to see the advantages of having their own troupes of *hayashi*. It seems that by 1970 there were seven *hayashi* troupes in Ishioka itself who performed at the festival that year.

It seemed a good idea to integrate these troupes into the one large corporate group, the *Ishioka-bayashi*, which was inaugurated in 1972. It consisted of seven *hayashi* troupes along with the *Mimura-bayashi*, the *Someya-bayashi* and *hayashi* troupes which played for the for *shishi* or lion dance (*Tsuchibashi-shishimai-ren*). This unified *hayashi* group was designated as an 'intangible heritage' in 1980, and that gave it the status and authority to develop and expand its activities.

At present there are twelve *hayashi* troupes, of which half are affiliated to the *Ishioka-bayashi* and the rest are not. Most of the unaffiliated groups were formed after the inauguration of the *Ishioka-bayashi*. They have been invited to join the unified group, but they have refused to, due to disagreements between the directors of the big corporate group, who are mostly elderly, and the members of the new troupes who are mainly young. However, these groups tend to be reluctant to say exactly why they do not want to join the larger group. It is necessary to note here that it is possible to regard all twelve of these *hayashi* troupes as '*Ishioka-bayashi*' in so far as they all perform in Ishioka. Consequently I shall not differentiate between the two types of group in this paper.

The significance of *Ishioka-bayashi*

The appearance of new *hayashi* troupes, forming the *Ishioka-bayashi*, altered the character of the festival and also the relationships between the various groups that participated in it. We can see that the formation of new local *hayashi* groups has alleviated the problem of communities competing to find performers to operate their *dashi*. But there have been other consequences too.

Today, each of the neighbourhoods which owns a *dashi* has their own exclusive *hayashi* troupe. This means there are no more *dashi* for the musicians from the countryside. As we have seen, *Ishioka-bayashi* as a unified performing group, consists of ten *hayashi* sub-groups, and of these, two, *Mimura-bayashi* and *Someya-bayashi*, are from neighbouring villages. There is one more sub-group which does not belong to any district within Ishioka and does not come from the villages either, this is the *Taisuke-bayashi*. Although these three performing groups are still listed as groups affiliated to the *Ishioka-bayashi*, they do not - and are no longer allowed to - give their performances on Ishioka's *dashi*. None of them appears in *Taisai* at the moment. However, there is a noticeable distinction among the three groups. *Mimura-bayashi* and *Someya-bayashi* have continued to perform *hayashi*, even though they are not allowed to do so in Ishioka. Since their activities are based in their own local communities, they still perform *hayashi* in their own shrine's festival, though it is said to be *much less exciting and thrilling* than the *Taisai* in Ishioka. But the *Taisuke-bayashi* is not based in a local community, and so can no longer perform anywhere.

The fate of the *Taisuke-bayashi*

It is useful to examine the list of members held by the *Ishioka-bayashi* Preservation Association (*Ishioka-bayashi rengō hozonkai*) to understand what happened to those three *hayashi* groups. In the 1976 edition, ten of the twenty-three members of the *Someya-bayashi* lived in Someyamura, and nineteen of the twenty-two members of the *Mimura-bayashi* lived in Mimura. Most of the other members of the *Someya-bayashi* came from nearby farming villages rather than from Ishioka city. By contrast, fifteen of the twenty-three members of the *Taisuke-bayashi* lived in western Ishioka and the rest of them were from other local villages and towns. So the members of the *Taisuke-bayashi* were mostly local residents of Old Ishioka and the rest their company lived outside the town. All the members played *hayashi* because they enjoyed it, but they were not based in any particular district.

The *Taisuke-bayashi* was important because it played a crucial role in reviving the *Mimura-bayashi*, in fact it was originally organised as the *Mimura-bayashi* Preservation Association. In 1959, two young men from 'Old' Ishioka visited the leader of the *Mimura-bayashi* to ask him to teach them *hayashi*. Although it was not easy to persuade him, they were eventually allowed to join the group as pupils. In the 1950s the *Mimura-bayashi* consisted of about ten people, all aged over sixty. The group was dying because its members were elderly and there was a shortage of new, young, local members. Given that the group was at risk of vanishing forever, the two newcomers felt they had to do something to keep this *hayashi* alive. They made up their minds to be the new *Mimura-bayashi* and to continue to perform. The original members, including the leader, allowed them to take over because they did not want to see the group disappear. In 1965 the *Mimura-bayashi*, formerly the *Taisuke-bayashi*, was revived and gave a *hayashi* performance on a *dashi* owned by one old neighbourhood (Kōmaruchō) the following year. However, this encouraged young people in Mimura to form a new *Mimura-bayashi* of their own, with about fifteen local members. It was set up in 1969. That meant there were two *Mimura-bayashi* troupes, so the members who did not live in Mimura, and came mostly from 'Old' Ishioka, changed the name of their group to *Taisuke-bayashi* in 1973.

Local *hayashi* troupes in Ishioka have steadily increased in number since the 1960s. At present every old neighbourhood possessing a *dashi* has its own *hayashi* troupe. It seems that all the *hayashi* troupes from the countryside had disappeared by about 1986.

From my analysis of local documents and interviews, it was *Someya-bayashi* that gave a performance on a *dashi* owned by Aokichō- in 1986, and this seems to be the last time an out-of-town group performed in Ishioka. As for the *Mimura-bayashi*, it has not had the opportunity to perform *hayashi* in *Taisai* since 1972. However it is notable that the members of the new *Mimura-bayashi* have succeeded in reviving the local festival at their Suga Shrine, as a new venue for their performances. The Suga festival had been moribund for several decades. The *Someya-bayashi* case is very similar; they perform at their own festival.

However, the *Taisuke-bayashi* completely lost the opportunity to perform. It continued to give a *hayashi* performance on a *dashi*, chiefly the one owned by Nakamachi, until 1980. Since then, the group has not appeared on a *dashi* in Ishioka at *Taisai*. The group celebrated the 30th anniversary of its foundation in 2003 in the middle of Ishioka. At the ceremony the former leader said to the - mostly elderly - members:

> *It is now impossible to keep on performing on the dashi in Ishioka like we used to, because of the current situation. But I truly believe that we did something important in Ishioka, for the sake of Sōshagō Taisai. It is sad and painful for us to leave, but our name will remain on the list of the Ishioka-bayashi as an 'Ibaraki Prefectural Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Heritage' forever, which is a great honour for us.*

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to illustrate the ups and downs of one of Japan's performing folk arts, *hayashi*, which was created, and is still performed, in Ishioka. I have endeavoured to shed some light on the twists and turns of the development of the *Ishioka-bayashi*, as well as on the disappearance of the *Taisuke-bayashi*, even though they were inextricably linked to each other in the beginning.

It was *hayashi* troupes from the countryside that played a crucial role in keeping the local shrine festival - *Taisai* - alive in the town of Ishioka. Since they were needed to operate the *dashi*, and the festival could not have been held without them, there were conflicts and

disputes among old neighbourhoods in western Ishioka about finding *hayashi* for their own *dashi* to celebrate the festival. Disputes arose because there was a shortage of *hayashi* troupes, and this encouraged more people to leam *hayashi* and set up troupes. It enabled everyone to have their *dashi* at the festival. This also pushed the village *hayashi* troupes out and meant they had to find other places to perform. However, the *Taisuke-bayashi* failed to find a way to survive, unlike the other village performing groups. They could not find anywhere to deliver their *hayashi* performances.

From this remarkable case, it can be seen how vital it is to provide performance groups with venues where they can perform. Yanagita Kunio's 'festivalism' theory provides some explanations. A group that is unable to perform will not attract new members to keep the tradition alive. However enthusiastic young people may be about traditional rituals, if they know there is no opportunity for them to perform they will not bother to learn the music and the dances, and those who already know them will stop practicing - in the modern world there are plenty of other things for them to do. Performers need an audience, the spectators encourage them to perform well.

Finally, it should be noted that all the *hayashi* groups that are based in local communities keep on performing because governments at national or prefectural level provide performance opportunities for them in local festivals. Moreover, there is a wide range of ceremonies and celebrations held by various organisations and individuals at which they are asked to perform, for example as an attraction for a citizens' festival, for anniversaries, and so on. It is also becoming quite common for shops to use folk performers to attract customers. However, these venues only invite performance groups that they know about, groups that academics have written about or who have appeared in the media. Other groups are less fortunate, and for them it is imperative to ensure that there are community-based performance venues, where they can perform regularly, interact with their audiences and compete with other performing groups. The venues need to be lively places, where there will be enthusiastic spectators, or the initiative will fail. It is the responsibility of communities to provide such venues as an active way of preserving performance arts; doing so raises the performers' self esteem and is a way of making people take a pride in their district and its history.

NOTES

1. Museums have been particularly important in preserving and displaying historically and socio-culturally significant patrimony, but their main focus has been on the tangible. See Boylan, 2006, pp.54-56. The publication from 2006 of the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* is an example of the growing academic interest in issues relating to intangible heritage.
2. See Singer, 2006. p.69.
3. For a fuller description of Yanagita's theory, see Hashimoto, 1998. Harootunian, 1998. and Vlastos, 1998.
4. See Yanagita, 1978.
5. This topic was discussed, especially in terms of the spectator as the 'other,' at greater length in another of my papers, Kim, 2006.
6. See also Boissevain, J. 1992. He argued that one of the effects of mass tourism is to give people more opportunities to watch *other celebrations*, and this makes *people more conscious of the performance aspects of their own rituals*.
7. *Ashi* is a Japanese unit of local government, generally translated as 'city' in English publications.
8. See its official website http://city.ishioka.lg.jp/018English/englishindex.htm
9. *A-mura* and *a -chō* which literally mean 'a village' and 'a township' respectively, are local administrative units in Japan.
10. *A -machi* is another word for *-chō* and is also one of the local administrative units.
11. For issues concerning local identity in Ishioka city, see Kim, 2007.
12. *A kuni* is an ancient local administrative unit and *Hitachi-no-kuni* is the name of one of the ancient local districts which is now part of the Ishioka region.
13. A detailed illustration of the *Sōshō* shrine will be shown in the next section.
14. The *dashi*, or lavishly decorated festival vehicle, is said to have been invented originally to welcome the deity from the shrine. There is a wide range of similar wagons all over Japan, but the most popular type in the Kantō area (which includes the capital, Tokyo, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Chiba, and Kanagawa prefecture) is a two-storied, occasionally three-storied, one. Generally, *hayashi* music and dance-dramas are staged on the lower level and decorations - such as huge puppet (*ningyō*) - are placed on the upper level. Although its religious and ritualistic significance is all but forgotten, *dashi* are still highly treasured because of their elaborate carvings and traditional joinery. They are still seen as symbols of community cohesion, identity and communal pride.
15. *Hyottoko* is an abbreviation of 'Hi-Otoko', which literally means 'Fire Man'. The pointed mouth is a typical feature of this character. However, other comic masks which highlight his silly character have been developed.
16. Hereafter *Taisai*.
17. For a more detailed description and extended discussion of Shinto, Shinto shrines, and *matsuri* as a Shinto festival in Japan, see Ashkenzai, 1993. and Schnell, S.1999.
18. See its official web site http://www.sosyagu.jp/index.html (only in Japanese).
19. The original original religious significance and features of Japanese *matsuri* have been lost. Although the ritual was meant to invoke and worship the deity with special food offerings, today it has been extended to take in all sorts of events, both sacred and secular. In Japanese, the word *matsuri* covers both religious rituals (*girō*) and festivals (*sairō*) and refers to people and society as well as to religion. See Kim, H. J. 2005.

20. The dates of most traditional events have today been moved to coincide with national holidays, as people's lifestyles have changed. This is one of the most significant changes to Japanese traditional events. *Taisai* is no exception. The date has changed five times; from the lunar 9th September to the new (Gregorian) 9th September in 1905; from the new 9th September to the new 9th October in 1911; from the new 9th October to the new 9th September in 1922; from the new 9th September to the new 15th September in 1967; and from the new 15th September to the three new national holidays. The dates of Shinto rituals are not supposed to change, so the ceremony at the shrine always takes place on September 15th.
21. For a discussion of the difference between 'play' and 'ritual', see Manning, 1983.
22. In the case of Ishioka, a neighbourhood is referred to as *-chō* or *chōnai*. 'The participant neighbourhoods' means districts involved in *Taisai*. To take part in *Taisai*, it is crucial that these neighbourhoods celebrate the festival by performing *shishi*, which literally means 'lion', or *dashi* (see footnote 15). There are 15 *chōnai* in western Ishioka. These *chōnai* are characterised by possessing *dashi* along with *shishi*. The 21 *chōnai* in eastern Ishioka maintain only *shishi*, except for one *chōnai* which has a *dashi*. The word *shishi* means'lion dance'. One performer wears the huge headdress of the *shishi* and goes along manipulating its mouth up and down and swinging the headdress roughly back and forth. This huge wooden *shishi* mask is connected to a big wooden rectangular wagon which is completely covered with a long cotton hood. This *shishi* dance is said to have the power to dispel misfortune and drive away evil spirits (Fig. 5).
23. In Japan, the national government, and the prefectural and municipal governments can all designate Important Intangible Folk-Cultural Properties. For an introduction to Japanese policy on the protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage, see Saito, H. 2005. and Miyata, 2005.
24. For further information about the formation of *Ishioka-bayashi*, see Kim, 2006.
25. In actual fact there is one more *hayashi* troupe in Ishioka. However, it is exceptional in various ways and so falls outside the scope of this paper.
26. Tsuchibashichō with only *shishi*, Nakanouchichō with *dashi* and *shishi*, and Tomitachō with *dashi* and a distinctive *shishi*, called *sasara*, are responsible for the special mission to purge the deity's path in the procession. Therefore their three *shishi*, even without *dashi*, are considered important and prestigious, and always lead the way before the deity in the procession. We do not know exactly when these three *shishi* were created but it is said to have been about 100 years ago.
27. Generally speaking, a flourishing local festival contributes to the local economy; furthermore, the festival itself can also be used to boost local economic growth. In the case of Ishioka, *Taisai* developed and flourished between 1900 and 1970, despite a period of war.

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Beyond the Dance: a Look at *Mbende (Jerusarema)* Traditional Dance in Zimbabwe

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Beyond the Dance: a Look at *Mbende (Jerusarema)* Traditional Dance in Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT

Traditional dance occupies a pivotal place in the economic, political and socio-cultural system in African traditional society. This role survives to the present day manifested in several performances that have stood the test of time and alien influences. Despite the onslaught of colonialism, Christianity and westernization, traditional dances have survived to this day, albeit with modifications. *Mbende / Jerusarema* in Zimbabwe is one dance that has withstood the test of time and western influence. It is an important cultural expression which in 2005 was listed on the UNESCO *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible heritage of humanity* list, making it one of the few African cultural expressions accorded such recognition. This paper looks into the history of the dance, the material culture and the skills and know-how associated with the unique performance. Observations in this paper were inspired by the research carried out by the committee formed to prepare a nomination file for the *Mbende* dance to the UNESCO masterpieces list in 2003, of which I was a member.

Introduction

In many cultures of the world, dance occupies an important role in the lives of the people. In Zimbabwe, traditional dances and performances such as *Jerusarema* are still important living traditions practiced in many contexts and still revered by the local communities. These numerous traditional dances are performed for entertainment, for ritual purposes, at festivals and for commemoration and celebration. The widely accepted explanation of the origins of *Jerusarema* is that it was performed as a war dance and diversionary tactic by the Shona during military encounters (Welsh-Asante, 2000a, 2000b). Currently, *Jerusarema* is performed on all festival occasions such as weddings,

celebrations, recreational competitions, funerals and political gatherings.

Mbende features as one of the most outstanding cultural expressions that are still practiced by the Zezuru people living in the Murehwa district in the Masholand East province of Zimbabwe. The dance has been passed down through many generations and remains one of the most important traditional performances in contemporary Zimbabwe. Threatened by colonial administrators, missionaries and westernisation, the dance has managed to survive and continues to be embedded in the social, political and cultural fabric of Shona society. *Mbende* features as one of the most outstanding cultural traditions that is still practiced by the Zezuru people living in the Murehwa district in the Masholand East province in Zimbabwe. Because of its importance, the dance is no longer restricted to the communities in Murehwa but has been adopted by other Shona and non-Shona groups, urban-based dance clubs and traditional performing groups, for tourists, political gatherings and other social events. Its evolution as a cultural expression has led to various changes. The drum, rattles and whistles, which used to accompany the dance, have been replaced successively by poor quality modern instruments, contributing to the detriment of the *Mbende* dance. As the context within which the dance is performed changes, so do other important aspects, such as the traditional knowledge and skills, messages and material culture associated with the practice.

Description of the Dance

The dance is characterised by sensual, acrobatic waist-shaking and hip movements by women in unison with men, both dancers ending with energetic thrusts of the pelvis directed towards each other, thereby creating exhilaration amongst the audience. It is such movements which made the dance unpopular among the missionaries who interpreted them as sexually explicit and suggestive. The music is performed by one master drummer, well supported by clappers, rattles, and costumes. (See Fig 1 and 2) The drumming, singing, clapping and rattle playing produce a polyrhythmic sound that drives the dance movements.

There are two foci of activity during the dance - the line of musicians who are constantly playing the





Figure 1
Jerusarema dancers, drummer and musicians

Figure 2
Jerusarema dance movements

rhythms, and the group of women and men who take turns to dance.

The dance can also be illuminated by Asante's (1985) observation of *Jerusarema* as an 'image dance' in the sense that it imitates an animal. However, in the case of *mbende* (mouse/mole), the purpose is not exclusively to imitate the mouse, but instead to use the mouse as a symbol of quickness, fertility, sexuality and family. While it projects the image and qualities of a mouse, there is little actual mimicking or caricaturing of a mouse. However, in the course of the dance, the men often crouch while jerking both arms and vigorously kicking the ground with the right leg in imitation of a burrowing mole kicking soil to the surface.

Struggle and Survival of *Mbende*

The uniqueness of *Jerusarema* and its dramatic impact and meaning, made it liable to various interpretations and this continues to the present day. The purpose and meaning of the dance is continually misunderstood; it is condemned for being too seductive and erotic and its immense popularity within the community was seen as a threat to the Christian Church's attempts to attract followers. In the urban metropolis the dance has been commercialised and new distorted versions have emerged that are also much criticised. Recently, the dance has been manipulated and adapted by the post-colonial administration seeking to create an 'acceptable' form for use during state political occasions.

Both as a form of cultural expression and as a symbol of the struggle for survival - and ultimately for freedom - through a turbulent history, the *Mbende* traditional dance now popularly known by its Christian name, *Jerusarema*, is unique not only for the people in Murehwa, but for the whole nation, as it features as a prominent performance at all national functions. It is widely believed that the traditional name of *Jerusarema* was *Mbende*, with the former being a biblical derivative from the holy city of Jerusalem in Israel, supposedly to make the dance more acceptable to Christian missionaries. *Jerusarema* continues to be practiced in both the rural and urban districts. Numerous *Jerusarema* dance clubs proliferate in Murehwa and beyond and the dance continues to feature on festive occasions, at funerals, political rallies and weddings, while urban based dance clubs list *Jerusarema* as one of their key performances.

There are many versions of the origins of the dance and its significance in the pre-colonial era, that is, the period before white settlement in the 1890s. Some say it symbolised fertility, sexuality and family. Others associate it with war, especially during the military raids by the Ndebele warriors on parts of Mashonaland during the Mfecane wars of the 1830s in southern Africa (Welsh-Asante, 2000a). According to this account, the dance was used as a diversionary tactic. The sensual and vigorous dance movements were used to divert the attention of the enemy before battle. Because of the fluid and dynamic nature of cultural practices, it is always difficult to ascertain the original form and purpose of such cultural performances which often manifest spatio-temporal variations. Nonetheless *Mbende's* curious name reveals much about its vicissitudes over the centuries.

The white missionaries saw *Jerusarema* as licentious, lustful, indecent and provocative, and collaborated with the Native Commissioners to ban *Jerusarema* which in their view was a hindrance to conversion of the locals to Christianity. Due to its prominence it also angered the early white settlers who were faced with the arduous task of recruiting African labour for the farms and the mines.

Writing in his award winning novel, *Ancestors*, Chenjerai Hove (1996) an acclaimed Zimbabwean writer, presents a local commenting on how *Jerusarema* was banned thus:

> *When 'Jerusarema' came, even the men who had wanted to avoid annoying the white man had to abandon all plans to go to Jo'burg (Johannesburg) to work and raise taxes for the white man. They refused and fought back when the white man came to capture them to put them to work on the roads and in the mines. Some went to hide in the mountains and hills during the day and came out at night to dance 'Jerusarema' with the women and men of the village. So the white man sat down one day and said: this dance is another problem. We must stop it. The dance gives too much pride to these men who refuse to work in our mines and on our roads. We must stop it forever. Never to be danced again. Never again to hear the songs which start this dance. Death to anyone who sings the songs. Death to anyone who dances the dance. That is how 'Jerusarema' was killed. We only hear of it in distant parts these days (Hove 1996: 128-29).*

Owing to such pressures *Jerusarema* was banned as early as 1910. It was this banning which necessitated the change of name to make it more acceptable. On the

other hand, the changing lifestyles caused by urbanization also altered the way it was performed. It seems that while certain performers modified the dance to please the white settlers by taking away those movements perceived to be unacceptable, another change seen by the local community as a distortion was taking place in the towns. Due to increasing urbanization from the 1920s onwards, *Jerusarema* was often performed for recreation in the township bars and beer halls. Welsh-Asante (2000a), argues that in this environment, the dance evolved into a dance that reflected the despair of a people dominated by colonial rule. She argues that the joy of dancing was contrasted with the despair of subjugation, and that the dance clubs spoiled the decency and meaning of a dance which was supposed to be ceremonial, by putting more emphasis on exaggerated sexual innuendo. While it is difficult to assess the impact of urban based *Jerusarema* performances on the performance of the dance elsewhere, one can agree with Welsh-Asante that such distortions vulgarised the dance. These urban based performances in dancing clubs seem to have shaped how *Jerusarema* was perceived in urban settings in the period after independence (post 1980).

The community in Murehwa continues to bemoan these exaggerations and distortions of the dance which have recently been made worse by some groups who perform mainly in concerts and for tourists. Two of the most prominent performing groups in Zimbabwe, 'Hohodza' and 'Inkululeko Yabatsha School of Arts' (IYASA) seem to perpetuate these misrepresentations. On their websites and promotional material they both list *Jerusarema* as one of their dances and describe it as:

> *A dance performed at night by men and women of marrying age. It is performed in pairs any time of the year. The dance is basically an exhibition of sexual prowess. The women show their flexibility while the men show their strength. Individual men and women boast of their sexual prowess and challenge each other to a "contest". They then dance the sexual encounter and, more often than not, the men are defeated by their mates and they stagger away, ashamed of themselves (Hohodza webpage, 2007).*

Despite the distortions and changes, good and bad, that have happened, the dance continues to have a special role in the present community and has assumed an influence that transcends the boundaries of the area from which it originates. Because of its popularity, *Mbende* drumming was selected as the introduction and signature tune for all radio and television news bulletins by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) at the attainment of independence in 1980. Such was its influence that a public outcry erupted after ZBC replaced the *Jerusarema* tune in 2000 and the national broadcaster was forced by public pressure to reinstate the tune. During the struggle for independence from the British settlers in the 1970s, the dance acted not just as a cohesive force among members of the community but also as an important conduit between the freedom fighters and the masses. The fighters, who largely employed guerrilla tactics, would disguise themselves and attend dance performances, giving them the opportunity to gather intelligence information and material support from the communities. In the period after independence this politicisation of the dance continued, with the dance featuring at political rallies and state functions. Its current popularity, therefore, does not merely emanate from its social and cultural uses but also from its adopted political function.

In 2005, *Mbende* was among the 43 cultural expressions from around the globe that were proclaimed as *masterpieces of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity* acknowledging the dance as a crucial living cultural heritage that is fragile and perishable, but essential for the cultural identity of the community, and one which represents an outstanding example of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, testifying to the world's cultural diversity and richness. *Mbende* was recognised among some of the best living traditions from around the globe. Other notable performances listed from the Southern African region include the *Makishi* masquerade from Zambia, the *Vimbuza* healing dance from Malawi and *Gule Wamkulu* (Zambia. Malawi and Mozambique). While the dance was nominated for the UNESCO list in 2005, Douglas Vambe, the renowned master drummer, was entered for the 2006 UNESCO cultural music heritage competition, where his drumming will compete with other traditional musical performances from around the world. Vambe was one of the chief informants during the compilation process for the UNESCO candidature file for the nomination of *Mbende*. The compilation process involved the wider community; stakeholder participants included dance clubs, chiefs, spirit mediums and the local leadership.



Figure 3
Examples of *Jerusarema* material culture

Material Culture Associated with *Mbende*

Though dance movements may be a skill and invaluable intangible phenomena, *Mbende* also embodies a rich material culture. The unique dance movements give the dance its character, but it is the material culture that gives the dance its unique identity. The diversity of objects it uses from the natural environment re-inforces the diversity of the relationship of man and nature.

Describing the role of material culture in musical traditions (Dournon:1981) notes that a musical instrument cannot be limited to the mere production of sounds. Traditional music and instruments convey the deepest cultural, spiritual and aesthetic values of civilisation, transmitting knowledge from many spheres. Material culture, besides having utility value, has always been used as an identity marker to establish uniqueness among groups. *Mbende* dance and its salient material culture are connected to the local people's history and experiences, culture and identity.

Two categories of material objects constitute the majority of objects used by the dancers; these are costumes and musical instruments. A variety of musical instruments and dancing costumes constitute the most dominant tangible aspect of Jerusarema. These are material objects exclusively identified with the dance. It is such objects - among other aspects of the dance - that gives it its unique character and distinguishes it from other performances. The material objects serve utilitarian and symbolic purposes and are a manifestation of creativity and craftsmanship within the practicing communities that demonstrates the relationship between the dance and its environment. A study of the objects provides a lot of information demonstrating nostalgia, complex skills, artistic expression and human/nature relationships as well as the continuity and change of the performance.

The major aspects of *Mbende* material culture are the musical instruments. In its setting, a *Mbende* musical instrument becomes imbued, both as an object and as an instrument, with multiple and varied meanings. *Mbende* musical instruments are aesthetically pleasing both to the ear and to the eye. Through an examination of the music, the performance contexts and the instrument itself, it was apparent what the instruments mean to the people who make and play them.

The drum, *mutumba*, is the most conspicuous instrument. Owing to its size it is made out of the *mutiti* tree (erythrina abyssinia) or the *mutsvanzwa* tree (pseodolanchnostylisis maprouneifolia). This is a rare but well protected indigenous tree chosen for the good quality of the wood, its strength and hardness and the superb resonance qualities. In many parts of Africa the sound and the rhythm of the drum expresses the mood of the people. The drum is one traditional musical instrument that is widely used all over Africa. (See figure 3) *Mbende* is characterised by its vibrant drumming and the *Mbende* drum occupies a central role in the dance sequence. So important was the drum that, according to oral information, every chief and village head was expected to keep a pair of drums that would be made available on request to villagers, making the chief an important custodian and protector of the performance.

Associated with drums are the intricate skills of drumming performed by renowned and well trained master drummers. Learning the art of drumming and the dance movements is not an easy activity. It can take up to 25 years of apprenticeship before one becomes a master-drummer or dancer. The art of drumming requires intricate skills, strength and mental alertness. The drummer must always be attentive to everything that is

happening in the dance arena, and when necessary is also the dance instructor. The common practice is that men do drumming while women use rattles and whistles. The *Jerusarema* drumming is rhythmic and considered to have a distinctive 'calling' effect which naturally draws the attention of whoever hears it. Usually two drums are used, though skilled master-drummers can use more drums simultaneously.

Other musical instruments used are wooden clappers (*maja/manja*) which accompany the singing and drumming to give a well-coordinated rhythm. Hard wood trees like the *mutara* tree (gardenia spaturiflora) are chosen for their strength. This is required to withstand the impact of constant clapping on the wood. The rhythmic clapping by clappers makes the whole experience thrilling, and excellent skill, physique and mental alertness are required for men to coordinate themselves between the roles of vocal humming, dancing and clapping. Traditionally, rattles made from gourd, and whistles made out of reed, were shaken and blown by women. Clubs currently use modern versions - rattles are made out of metal, plastic or fibreglass while commercially made plastic whistles are preferred.

The second major category of *Mbende* material objects are the dancing costumes (See Fig). Traditionally these were made out of animal skins, but due to the influence of western dress these have been modified and today's dancers mostly use textile costumes in combination with animal skin. The materials used and the structure of the costumes have an aesthetic appeal and enhance the dance movements. The *mbikiza/ madhumbu* made of thin stripes of flexible animal skin complement the dance movements and have considerable sensual appeal for spectators. The waist shaking and hip thrusting movements by the women were enhanced by the wearing of flexible animal skin skirts. These were made from the skins of leopards, monkeys, cheetahs and wild cats whose leather is flexible, comfortable to wear and easy to work. The skins of other domestic animals like cattle, goats and sheep are sometimes used but the quality of these garments is much poorer than that of those made from wild animal skins.

The alterations in the objects associated with the dance also affect the continuity of traditional knowledge and skills and the associated environmental knowledge. The knowledge of craftsmanship and construction and conservation of traditional instruments and costumes has been adversely affected. As fewer and fewer people use traditional drums and other instruments, the production of traditional instruments declines as they are replaced by easy-to-make, poor quality, modern substitutes. For example, as performers discard traditional costumes, their manufacture also declines and so does the know-how of traditional garment makers. The production of traditional costumes survived on good hunting practices and skills, the art of processing animal skins and constructing them into appropriate, comfortable, aesthetically appealing clothing. All this traditional expertise is under threat as the dancers opt for easy-to-buy, cheap, textile substitutes. The preservation of the performance therefore should not focus on the performance alone, but incorporate the various artifacts, skills and know-how associated with the dance. It is such things which guarantee the integrity and authenticity of this unique and important performance.

Conclusion

Traditional dance as a form of cultural expression continues to occupy a prominent position in many African societies. In spite of pressures, some traditional dances have survived and continue to show resilience. *Mbende* continues to occupy an important position not only in the local area from which it originates, but it has also grown to be a significant national expression exhibiting many qualities worthy of promotion and preservation. The unique dance movements, the cultural significance of the dance in the wider society, the objects it uses and the skills and craftsmanship needed to make them, all form an important intangible heritage. The dance itself continues to be negatively affected by outside influences, hence the urgent need for the preservation of those *Mbende* cultural practice closest to its original form. More importantly, promoting *Mbende* activities will re-establish the dance in society and ensure its continued existence. The nomination of the dance as a UNESCO masterpiece will definitely enhance the preservation of this important aspect of intangible heritage in Zimbabwe by providing the necessary resources and expertise.

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The Internet as a Tool for Communicating Life Stories: a New Challenge for 'Memory Institutions'

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The Internet as a Tool for Communicating Life Stories: a New Challenge for 'Memory Institutions'

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ABSTRACT

This paper arguesthat life stories and other personal biographical accounts should be considered as significant manifestations of the intangible cultural heritage. It addresses the consequences for 'memory institutions', i.e. museums, libraries, archives and similar bodies, in relation to the protection and safeguarding of this heritage. First, the main challenges that these institutions have to face in order to protect this special kind of heritage are considered. Second, there is consideration of the main changes caused by the introduction of new information communication technologies (ICTs) into the cultural heritage world, and specifically, the effect of ICT developments on the institutions responsible for autobiographical memoirs are examined.

Life Stories as Intangible Cultural Heritage

Heritage has traditionally been regarded primarily as something passed down from our cultural ancestors, which present society has an obligation to conserve and then transmit on to future generations. This idea, deeply entrenched not just in people's imaginations, but also in much national legislation and regulations and in international agreements, has been dominated by the material and objective dimensions of culture, in which the heritage item was very often regarded as the visualisation of the power and life of the dominant cultural, political and economic classes.

With the emergence, and now the consolidation, of the concept of an important intangible cultural heritage to be considered and supported alongside the physical or tangible heritage, the concept of cultural identity has become systematically linked to that of this dynamic and living heritage. Therefore, we need to understand that the process of identifying heritage is a way of adding value to a series of items, transforming them into symbols of their community. We must also understand cultural identity as the result of a collective historic experience in all fields (economic, political, social and cultural) which generates a set of shared values and attitudes. Therefore, this wider

concept of heritage is both linked to the concept of identity and to the acknowledgement of cultural diversity[1]. Also, any process of heritage identification has a political content, as it allows certain characteristics of groups to be visualised and accentuated, and making some invisible, and silencing or distorting others.

The 2003 UNESCO *Intangible Heritage Convention* defines the Intangible Cultural Heritage as the:

> *...means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.*[2]

Though perhaps not explicit in the text, the life stories of ordinary people which explain situations, events, experiences or actions carried out by the protagonists, and variously known as oral sources, testimonies, life histories or memoirs according to the academic discipline, clearly fall within the Convention's definition as *--expressions, knowledge, ... transmitted from generation to generation --*

Life stories are so important, and can justifiably be considered significant manifestations of the heritage, because they form part of a much more complex construct related to the collective memory of a particular community or human group and are part of their identity mechanisms. Within contemporary museology therefore, as well as within modern library and archive practice, personal memoirs and reminiscences of all kinds are now recognised as forming a significant part of the intangible cultural heritage, within which the individual experience forms a part of the common and shared memories that make up the identity of a community, whether this is identified in social, ethnic or even gender terms.

Important contemporary examples of such significant memories and life stories will include those of immigrants: not only memories of their country of origin, but also their account of how the receiving country treated them. Other examples include the memories of the industrial workers who not only conserve memories of past modes of production, the associated ways of life, and more generally, of a world that is now in decline or has totally disappeared. Within the political sphere, there is great value in the memories of women and their achieving of full rights in civil life, of accounts featuring the traumatic memories of exiled people and of survivors of war, genocide or dictatorship, and of any other trauma which a particular community has suffered. However, this viewpoint is by no means universally accepted as yet, and a large part of the museum, library and archive communities can still be reticent about including this kind of original heritage evidence in exhibitions, publications and other discourses.

If we accept that memories are legitimate, indeed in many cases important, manifestations of heritage, and that such life stories include accounts of both traumatic and non-traumatic experiences, we will recognise that the conserving and presenting of these may have consequences reaching beyond the heritage framework into other areas, such as politics and economics. Examples include stories of survivors of the Holocaust, of reprisals after the Spanish Civil War or of the recent genocide in the Balkans. All three examples of such narratives have an evidential component which has been used socially as a source of political protest, and which has allowed the opening (or reopening in some cases) of legal processes with very important political and economic consequences.

Over the past few years many professionals across a range of disciplines have been calling for the explicit recognition of personal stories as one of the categories which is recognised as a significant part of the intangible cultural heritage. While it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to amend the text of the *Intangible Heritage Convention* itself because of the legal and administrative problems this would entail, it would be, comparatively, very easy to recognise narrations linked to life experience within the Operational Guidelines that are to be drawn up, and regularly reviewed, under the provisions of the *Convention*.

For example, the director of the Museum of the History of Immigration of Catalonia, Spain, Ms. Imma Boj, says:

> *Because there is no sense without knowing who had it drawn up, why they had it drawn up, if they were paid fairly or unfairly, that is, the whole context is what will really give us the piece, and the value that this piece has as heritage. What is heritage? Heritage is something that explains and helps us to understand who we are and what our identity is. Therefore, for us, it is very important that it is heritage and not something else, it is not folklore. This man danced. How did he dance, what do those dance steps explain, but also why is he dancing? I don't want the dance explained, rather why he is dancing.*[3]

The significance of such personal memories, whether oral in the case of those still alive, or written or otherwise recorded, can play an important part in developing the total historical memory in this section, as the Spanish anthropologist Victoria Quintero Moron recognises in relation to the losing side in the Spanish Civil War:

> *In this development of new meanings, people are opening up to the idea of designating the narrations and memoirs of the protagonists of the repression of the Franco regime as heritage, of converting the memory into a cultural item (or its representation in a database or interpretation centre.)*[4]

A Challenge to Traditional Cultural Institutions

However, incorporating intangible evidence such as personal memoirs into the wider heritage dialogue challenges established heritage institutions and traditions and calls for quite fundamental transformations, some which are analysed below.

Though so far the emergence on the scene of the concept of intangible cultural heritage has had only limited effects on the established cultural scene, it has the potential to have a considerable effect over the longer term on the world of museums, libraries and archives. Following some other recent researchers, we have adopted the expression 'Memory Institutions' or the acronym ALM Sector (ALM = Archives, Libraries and Museums) to refer to all kinds of institution with responsibilities for different aspects of the cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, of the community they serve, including personal memoirs, oral history and similar cultural manifestations. The term 'Memory Institution', which originated in the English-speaking world over the past decade or so, now has a fairly wide range of references, and is used to cover not only museums but also a wide spectrum of other institutions and organisations which carry out actions for the conservation of heritage.

These, along with related kinds of bodies, have in recent years been collectively termed by some specialists, especially those researching the information sciences 'Memory Institutions', This term was apparently coined by Hjerppe in 1994 as a collective term to cover a range of cultural heritage institutions, including libraries, museums, archives, monuments, sites and places, botanical gardens, zoological gardens and all other kinds

of collecting institutions. The expression became more widely used after its inclusion by Lorcan Dempsey in a study dated 2000 for the European Union, which defined it as follows:

> *Memory institution. We have no term in routine use which includes libraries, archives and museums. Again, for conciseness, we sometimes use cultural institutions and memory institutions in this inclusive sense.)*[5]

However, the expression does not seem to have been widely adopted outside a fairly narrow field, mainly discussions of metadata, particularly in relation to new media, within information science. In the first place, there are difficulties in applying traditional museum, library or archive techniques to the preservation, documentation and communication of the intangible. To conceive of a traditional exhibition presenting non-material heritage tears down all the established theories about how heritage should be presented in museums and similar institutions. Also, the intangible heritage is something that is living and in constant evolution, and this makes things extraordinarily difficult. In an interview for this research the Director of the Museum of the History of Immigration of Catalonia told us:

> *We have no reference models because [these] have not yet reached the discourse of intangible heritage. Therefore, you explain intangible heritage through a column, and you hear the story on some headphones? Is that enough? This story is covered by the documents people contribute, but is that enough? We just don't know. The truth is that we have talked to some museologists, and each one has very different ideas about the subject, with the result that it is very complex, very complicated.?*[6]

The second reason is conceptual. Other than a very small number of museums specifically created under these criteria, such as the Museum of the History of Immigration of Catalonia, the Museu da Pessoa (Museum of the Person) in Brazil[7], and a few others, museums generally, particularly those in thematic areas such as science, technology, national and local history, or the fine and applied arts, do not usually include such autobiographical stories in their collections or exhibitions [8].

The majority of museums that are today actively working with life stories basically belong to two types. The first are some progressive ethnographic and social history museums which have an anthropological concept of culture, and hence consider part of their mission as being to protect cultural diversity and social inclusion. ICOM has a specialist International Committee that covers this kind of institution and its staff, namely ICME - the International Committee of Museums and Collections of Ethnography [9].

The second category is the so-called Memorial Museum, which has been created with the aim of bringing recognition and belated justice to the victims of a particular conflict or State-organised or sanctioned injustice (wars, genocides, armed conflicts etc.) Traditionally these have been included within the category of history or biographical museum, although many have specific characteristics related to places and physical spaces with a strong symbolic charge because of their historical transcendence (e.g. Auschwitz-Birkenau, the former Nazi concentration and extermination camp of 1940-1945 in Poland). In 2001 a further specialist international committee was established within ICOM for this category of museum: ICMEMO - International Committee of Memorial Museums in Remembrance of the Victims of Public Crimes[10].

Though these two types of museums, and other memory institutions such as libraries and archives that are documenting similar personal stories and memories, work with a similar type of material, they are conceptually very different. In fact, more and more memory institutions are appearing to deal with subjects that cannot directly fit into either of these two categories. A hybridisation is occurring involving what is really a conceptual change from a focus on the object to a focus on the person: in other words from matter to knowledge, which is presenting new challenges and allows new audiences to be reached. The role and functions of many traditional memory institutions is therefore being transformed.

Firstly, traditional institutions can join the emerging new heritage philosophy and trends and take an active role in the collection, conservation and fixing of personal narrations by means of recording and transcription of the stories. This requires the adoption of what are now well-

established methodologies and technologies: for example in written form such as biographies, diaries and reminiscences, or as audio or video recordings, with or without transcription on to paper or digital text. However, the process of materialising the intangible cultural heritage in this way transforms it and risks distancing it from its dynamic nature.

Secondly, the memory institution's role as an interpreter of the symbolic and metaphorical meanings of the objects must remain fundamental, allowing the contextualisation and diffusion of the material it looks after in greater depth, and its diffusion. Thirdly, a museum or similar body that seeks to care for such manifestations of the intangible heritage modifies its own role by doing so, and becomes a guardian and protector of such resources and a heritage mediator.

This mediation can be at different levels. On one level, all memory institutions can be regarded as acting as mediators between information and knowledge, coding or classifying the heritage object (documenting, contextualising, fixing) so as to be able to show the full range of its cultural meanings, a process that we will call 'heritage interpretation'. At a second level, memory institutions can act as mediators between a particular living experience and the 'product' (recording, written text etc.) that is communicated to a public which will not necessarily share the experiences and memories. On a third level, a memory institutions can exercise a mediating function as an activator of memory and a promoter of local identities. It is in this dimension that memory institutions achieve a definite social function, particularly in relation to the intangible cultural heritage.

It can be argued that the emergence of such concepts, and the adoption by their countries of international obligations under measures such as the 2003 UNESCO *Convention on the Intangible Heritage* and the 2005 UNESCO *Cultural Diversity Convention*, obliges memory institutions to rethink the profile and the tasks of their professional personnel. Some reflections on the necessary reform of the museum profession already exist: see for example the arguments of Boylan in the first volume of this *Journal*[11]. Conferences and congresses on the implications of this widening concept of heritage have been organised over recent years within ICOM by its International Committee for the Training of Personnel (ICTOP)[12], International Committee for Museology (ICOFOM)[13] and the International Committee for Conservation(ICOM-CC)[14]. In fact, ICTOP has updated the long-established ICOM *Curricula Guidelines* recognizing that training for professionals needs to be broadened to explicitly cover managing the intangible heritage, arguing in the preamble that:

> *The new ICOM initiative encouraging museums to become places responsible for safeguarding and transmitting intangible heritage has set in motion changes that will significantly affect traditional institutional roles and procedures. The initiative will require museum personnel to possess new and different knowledge, skills and attitudes, just as its corollary, staff training and professional development offerings and programs, will be obliged to revise their content and methodology.*[15]

Communicating Intangible Heritage On-line

At the same time we need to bear in mind the equally far-reaching effects of the progressive introduction of the new Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the field of cultural heritage including museums. These profound transformations are not only influencing museographic discourses, particularly those relating to museum communication and education, but are also affecting the very essence of established museology, giving rise to a new field of specialisation that is being termed 'Cybermuseology'. To quote museologist Dominique Langlais:

> *The communication and interaction possibilities offered by the Web to layer information and to allow the exploration of multiple meanings are only starting to be exploited. In this context, cybermuseology is known as a practice that is knowledge-driven rather than object-driven, and its main goal is to disseminate knowledge using the interaction possibilities of ICTs.*[16]

Within this new environment, the widespread adoption of ICTs by the heritage world provides innovative opportunities to overcome many of the problems caused by the apparently ephemeral and mutable nature of the intangible heritage. It is dangerous to over-state the case at this comparatively early stage in such developments,

but it seems very likely that the use of the Internet in this kind of project allows us to achieve some important milestones, as summarised in the following three subsections of this paper.

Fixing and preserving memories

As regards the best way to fix memories, there are two radically opposing standpoints. The first argues that it must be the professional-expert him/herself who obtains, codifies and classifies the memories, in order to guarantee the rigour and coherence of the process. The alternative view is that this expert intervention strips the memories of their nature as valid intangible heritage and risks manipulating them. The anthropologist, Jack Goody, believes that:

> *--- the code used by someone outside of the studied society imposes particular cognitive and mental structures on the subject using it. Therefore the codification process is neither neutral nor objective.*[17]

Dominique Langlais is of the same opinion:

> *A virtual museum is a construction, a code in itself, which is encoded technically by the website developer and socially by the curator --- Just like in a traditional museum, curators are responsible for what is included, and what is excluded from a body of knowledge. The source of control is pyramidal and represents the dominant ideology about a certain body of knowledge.*[18]

To avoid such a risk, some museologists consider that the personal narrative or biography should be presented without any later elaboration, though others think that the mere fact of recording it pre-configures how it will be shown, so if there is any damage it has already been done by the mere process of recording the intangible tradition. Speaking from the point of view of the memories of Holocaust survivors, Ringelheim and Ellis argue:

> *Oral history is not a refined record. A memoir is very refined. There's something very raw about oral history, which I think also makes it compelling. Although memoirs are very compelling, the refinement of writing and the editing of writing are very different to what you see on the screen or hear when you listen to an oral history?*[19]

However, other authors claim that the codification process is precisely what allows society to interpret a narrative correctly. The leading cultural studies analyst, Stuart Hall, in his widely quoted and discussed 1980 article on semiotic analysis, *Encoding/Decoding* (*Codage/decodage* in the 1994 French version) argues that:

> *--- the process of encoding a message, through cultural discourse (which can be supported by any media) will rely on codes that are accepted and recognised in any given society. The combination of those operations leads or allows us to articulate the social and cultural map of the conditions of the process of knowledge [production]*[20]

Nevertheless, fixing memories through interviews and later digitalisation (whether of text transcripts or of the original audio or video recording) greatly improves the preservation of life stories. Although it is true that collecting the memoirs at a certain moment 'freezes' them in time, something that arguably contradicts their mutable character, the same is true in relation to many manifestations of heritage: it is only the collecting and fixing of them that ensures their longer-term conservation and dissemination.

Therefore, one of the greatest allies to the preservation of, and easy access to, both life and other stories and the databases which index them, is the recent remarkable advance in the use of ICTs in relation to such information. It is true that we must bear in mind that rapid technological evolution may mean that the actual systems of recording and playback etc. used are likely to become obsolete quite quickly, and this presents problems. However, it is certainly true that while the originals should be preserved so far as possible, recorded testimonies are much better safeguarded if they are copied to a more robust modern media than they usually are in their original formats which are subject to the hazards of mould, damp and the decomposition of the paper or vinyl tape, etc.. Establishing databases to index and retrieve recordings and their content also requires the creation of a taxonomy of classifications which allows relationships to be created in the kinds of multi-space networks required for retrieval and use within social,

historical, technological, geographical and cultural contexts and different disciplines.

As an example of best practice, for example, over the past thirty years or more the Venezuelan National Library, in Caracas, has built up a major national archive of sound, cine, television, video and digital recordings running to several shelf-kilometres with items up to a hundred years or so old, preserved in an almost bewildering range of physical (and more recently computer) formats. However, in order to process and manage this material the Library has, almost by accident, had to build up a substantial 'living museum' of many dozens of types of historic technical equipment, restored and maintained in full working order by a team of engineers and technicians, so that the original archive material can be played back in its original format and then be copied onto modern media for conservation and communication purposes.

From 2004 on, with the emergence of the Web 2.0 concept, the forty years old or more system of classification and categorisation of content by keywords or 'tags' assigned by the staff, has been extended beyond its original specialised areas of computer programming or digital print text formatting. These new classifications are characterised by being shared social actions that aim to provide new ways of accessing museum, library or archive collections in an associative manner. One good example of the use of social tagging in this context is the project *Katrina's Jewish Voices* (http://katrina.jwa.org/) from the The Jewish Women's Archive in collaboration with the Center for History and New Media. Through the contributions of individuals and organizations nationwide, the project is creating a virtual archive of stories, images, and reflections about the New Orleans and Gulf Coast Jewish communities before and after Hurricane Katrina.

These new approaches do not rely on any kind of pre-determined protocol or indexation and so there is no kind of terminological control. One weakness of this approach is that the search results obtained are subjective, and hence can be unreliable. On the positive side, however, what this kind of classification can contribute is a high level of participation amongst users, as Canadian museologist and ITC pioneer, Jennifer Trant, argues:

> *Social Tagging (the collective assignment of keywords to resources) and its resulting Folksonomy (the assemblage of concepts expressed in such a co-operatively developed system of classification) offer ways for (art) museums to engage with their communities and to understand what users of on-line museum collections see as important.*[21]

Despite such risks, however, it is clear that the digitalisation and cataloguing of personal narratives and other records has to be seen as a basic tool for their conservation and communication.

Creating networks

A second characteristic of the Internet which we would like to highlight, is its role as an instrument which favours the creation of networks and synergies between the different agents. These networks can be of diverse types. In the first place, the Internet allows the creation of institutional networks, and the creation of complex projects which involve the partnership of different memory institutions. This is very significant, above all in projects which have a common thematic nexus, even if the institutions are located in different countries. The cooperation between 24 different migration museums round the world through the Migration Museums Network[22] is one good example of this. Another is the creation of on-line video archives of interviews, like that of the Shoah Foundation at the University of Southern California which has done projects with survivors of the Holocaust,[23] the on-line *Conversations* of the International Museum of Women,[24] or the network set up by four personal life story museums in Brazil, Portugal, the USA and Canada.[25]

It is not only institutional networks that are greatly facilitated by the Internet. Social networks are developing rapidly at both individual and community level between diverse groups, such as indigenous peoples, older generations recording their life experiences, extended families interested in their own genealogy, family history and family memories, and people interested in accessing memories of particular issues or events that they themselves do not remember. In respect of all this, it may be helpful to think of intergenerational networks where the memory institution acts as an intermediary between generations with significantly different life experiences. As Ms. Imma Boj put it in our interview:

We want interviewing to be done by a broad range of people. While scientific work is done by anthropologists, there are also tasks carried out by people interviewing each other: schoolchildren interviewing their grandparents, elderly people explaining their history on the Internet or in IT Rooms for the Elderly.[26]

Such networks may bring together a wide range of institutions and community groups. For example, the current *Moving Here: 200 Years of Migration to England Project*, partly funded by the National Lottery, has over 30 Web partner organisations. These include major national institutions such as the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Museum of London, other local government museums, libraries and archives, both large and small, from across the country, and voluntary organisations, such as the Black Cultural Archives and the London Jewish Museum.

Moving Here explores, records and illustrates why people came to England over the last 200 years and what their experiences were and continue to be. It offers free access, for personal and educational use, to an online catalogue of versions of original material related to migration history from local, regional and national archives, libraries and museums, and to many original documents from these sources. In addition, *Moving Here* gives every visitor to its website the opportunity to publish their own experience of migration. These contributions are grouped under 19 themes, including politics, arts, sport, military service, women's lives and celebrations. Currently (April 2008), in addition to a huge amount of material provided by the partner organizations, there are 1032 personal narratives of the experience of, or reaction to, inward migration.

Moving Here aims to overcome barriers to the direct involvement of minority ethnic groups in recording and documenting their own history of migration, and to ensure this history is passed on to the next generation through schools. The promoters considered that it was crucial to work with minority ethnic groups to ensure that the voices of different immigrants were heard.[27] The project is continuing to develop, with partnerships with a further 16 local organisations organised through four of England's government-funded 'Regional Hubs' for museum, library and archive co-operation and development, plus the National Museums Liverpool.[28]

Through such digital networks, museums and other memory institutions are using the Internet as a mechanism for social inclusion and promoting the visibility of disadvantaged communities and groups who do not have access to the traditional media. Many of the oral recording projects promoted by such memory institutions explicitly stress their wish to give a 'voice' to those who do not generally have one. Thus, such institutions are serving as a space where all kinds of personal narratives as well as actions of protest can be hosted, thus helping to overcome the digital division between the economically underprivileged and those with greater resources. Writing of the *Mediterranean Voices* project funded through the European Union's EuroMed Heritage II interview-based ITC oral history programme, Margaret Hart Robertson explained that:

[Mediterranean Voices] was an attempt to let 'muted' voices be heard, the voices of the ordinary people, talking about how they make sense of their past and their present. It was an attempt to consolidate the intangible heritage of who we are and where we come from, the 'roots' and the 'routes' [of the migrants and their migrations] in order to fortify local self-esteem and help others understand the 'true' historical memory of the places involved, as opposed to what is said or left unsaid in the official history books.[29]

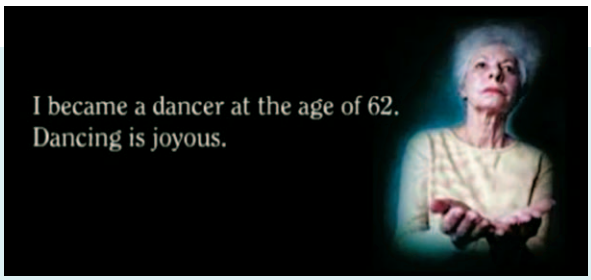


Figure 1
Diagram showing part of the UK's *Moving Here -200 Years of Migration* Network.

When taken to its highest level, as in the case of traumatic memories, such intangible heritage narratives can help create a favourable climate for the recognition, among civil society generally, of the justice of claims and complaints from minority communities. In such cases the memory institution can play an important role in giving visibility to activist movements that in turn can promote genuine social transformation. As Harriet Deacon puts it:

> *In South Africa one of the main forms of Intangible Heritage celebrated at a national level, as a cornerstone of the move to build post-apartheid national identities, is the oral memory of experiences under Apartheid governments (1948-1994). These stories range across ethnic and national boundaries, and across a number of self-defined communities (exiles, political prisoners, activists, local communities etc.).*[30]

Improving access to Intangible Cultural Heritage through ICT

In the same way, the Internet can assist in the democratisation of heritage in a more general way through providing an alternative access to a new public, who, because of their education or difficulties of geographical distance are, or at least feel, excluded from traditional museum, library and archive resources. Although this can apply to any kind of heritage, in the case of autobiographical memoirs such opportunities are especially valuable, since otherwise the great majority of this type of testimony is to be found in archives which, though supposedly open to all, are, in practice, often only accessed by a very limited public: those both able to visit them in terms of location, and with the specialised knowledge that may be needed to read and interpret the documents.

In contrast with this, the possibility of consulting memoirs on line, and their use in virtual exhibitions and teaching resources, means that access is very wide - indeed worldwide in geographical terms - and is available at all times of the day or night, not just when the establishment institutions are open to the public. Nevertheless, such democratisation is not automatic, and it is necessary to bear in mind that the availability and cost of access to the Internet varies enormously from place to place. Both the well-recognised phenomenon of digital exclusion for financial or other access reasons, and the control of networks by power groups (including governments in some cases) can be a significant impediment in providing free access to information.

Despite all this, the digitalisation of memoirs on the Internet leads to the globalising of heritage, while offering at the same time a clear local, or community, group identity. Personal memoirs, as life stories anchored in a specific time and place, typically have a strong local component, but nevertheless their dissemination on the Internet leads to trans-national and mimetic processes in which points of contact and spaces of empathy arise when the viewer or reader is faced with accounts of experiences that are different, though, perhaps surprisingly, are found to share many common features. Thus, while built around the individual stories of the Holocaust, the total collection of narrations by its survivors have been widely adopted as a model for how other, perhaps very different, narratives and memoirs of the period can be presented. Above all perhaps, it is the Holocaust that has penetrated the collective imagination of the second half of the 20th century most completely, making this a model for other very different narrations.

The ethnic cleansing of the Balkans during the 1990s finds parallels with the 1940s Shoah of the Jewish people. In the same way, the migration experiences of the new arrivals from Sub-Saharan countries to the Spanish coasts in the past few years are mirrored by those of emigrants to Latin America in the 19th and early 20th centuries. There is not just a globalisation of knowledge, but also of life experiences, which results in the creation of new narratives.

In these, the narrative models can be applied to different experiences, and may well combine elements of a diverse nature: hypertexts, images, audio, video, animations etc.. This multiplicity of elements results in new ways of interpreting and disseminating the cultural heritage, particularly the intangible cultural heritage, that is more interactive, more accessible, more didactic than that of the traditional museographic discourse based on exhibiting objects accompanied by contextualizing explanations. This transformation allows the protagonists themselves to make the listener accomplices in their own story through their voices and their gestures. One particularly good example of this is the on-line exhibition *Life after the Holocaust* at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

(http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/life_after_holocaust)

This site employs cutting edge approaches to non-linear storytelling, borrowing techniques and best practices from print and exhibition design as well as video and audio production. The content is organized into three levels; each level was intended to appeal to a vast variety of user types and help guide users deeper into the content.

The first level allows users to see the content organized by theme. The second level allows the users to delve deeper into the themes. Each theme level includes 30-60 second audio segments related to the themes. The third level, which included the 30-minute interview, was also equipped with an album containing photographs given by each of the survivors profiled. These interviews were also made available in a downloadable mp3 format. The mp3s serve as take-aways from the site and make it easier for users to experience the content on portable audio devices[32].

ICT uses: problems and advantages

One of the basic issues on which there is a lack of unanimity among institutions is the extent to which there is a need to provide full Internet access to the institution's collections, in this case to the personal testimonies and narratives. For various reasons, most professionals are reluctant to allow completely unrestricted consultation of their collections, usually offering only partial and controlled access. Most libraries, and a growing number of archive repositories, now offer at least on line consultation of the catalogues of their collections. Among museums, the most common solution is to offer on line only fragments of interviews or other personal narratives in transcription, audio or video, and generally primarily as illustrations of the discourse of a particular exhibition or programme.

The main reasons for concern and restrictions on access are ethical and practical. There can be genuine problems with regard to privacy, since testimonies may deal with very personal and sensitive subjects and include named, or otherwise easily identifiable, people (such as other members of the family) who may not have been consulted about the interview or recording. Institutions have often dealt with this problem by allowing open access to the catalogue and to fragments of the testimonies, while reserving access to the full narrative to people who visit the institution in person. A second ethical reason is that an interview that has been recorded for a particular purpose and under specific conditions, with the consent of the interviewee for that specific purpose, could easily be manipulated and used in a quite different way without the subject of the recording having any possibility of controlling this new interpretation of their narrative.

A third ethical aspect to be considered is that the Internet allows the posting of interviews that pre-date the construction of the digital project, so again there has been no explicit permission from the witness to post the interview on the Internet at all. In this case, the narrator's basic rights, especially the right to decide the level of access to their words, is violated. (Who was his/her testimony meant for: researchers? official bodies? the general public?) Similarly, an interview taken out of context may become simply a virtual object. Finally, and not the least of the main ethical problems for institutions arising from digitalisation and free access to their collections via the Internet, is the ease with which any kind of document or file can be copied and re-published without any kind of control, whether of its veracity, ethics or reliability.

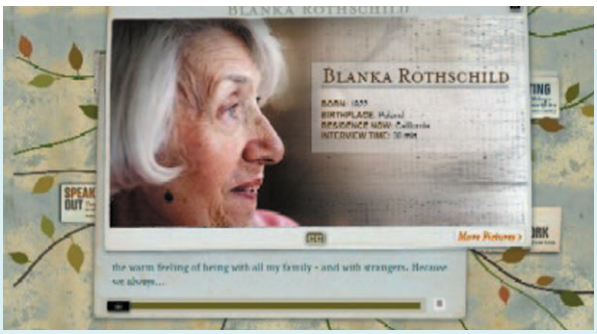


Figure 2
Screen-shot from the on-line exhibition *Life after the Holocaust* at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which combines texts, images, audio and video files, with animations in Macromedia Flash. <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/life_after_holocaust>

There are also significant management problems in relation to providing wide public access. Firstly, despite the truly remarkable fall in the cost of digitising existing collections over recent years, the cost is still regarded, rightly or wrongly, by many memory institutions as expensive enough to dissuade many museums from placing their collections on line. Secondly, and linked with the first point, there is often a serious lack of staff available for digitising, classifying and entering data, or of the money needed to hire an external agency to do the work.

Finally, there can be copyright and other legal problems (or high charges for reproduction permissions) when an institution proposes to upload onto Internet-based services recently-published material which is still in copyright, databases created by other institutions or copies of unpublished archive documents. Even so, although this is not yet normal practice, it is still worth considering publishing at least some examples of personal interviews and memories (with due consents of course) on the institution's web site, in addition to simply giving access to the information to visitors who come in person.[33] Even where a visit will ultimately be necessary, preliminary work on search engines will then allow users to identify material relevant to their interests in advance of their visit, potentially saving hours of searching.

At the present time it is still desirable for the interviews to be tagged and codified, but the increasing sophistication of the main search engines, such as Google, is beginning to make 'free text' searching without this a practicable longer-term solution. An alternative possibility, where for whatever reason something cannot be copied to the institution's own web site, is to create hyperlinks to the original quotation on another site, enabling the user to check the source of any academic work and guarantee rigour in its use.

A third element to be considered is that the Internet allows the user of oral history to hear the real voice. As soon as an interview is transcribed it loses the tone of voice, accent, intonation and all the other signs that accompany and contextualise the testimony. Having direct access to recordings enables the preservation of all this sound information that is inevitably lost in transcription. Furthermore, the use of sound archives allows for the conveyance of emotions, making the testimony more appealing, convincing, and accessible to the visitor than would be achieved through merely reading its transcription.

Conclusions

The incorporation of sound and visual archives into cybermuseographical discourse creates new narratives that combine a range of elements: hypertexts, images, audio, video, animations etc.. This very multiplicity of elements combines to create a new way of interpreting and disseminating heritage that is more interactive, accessible and didactic. The traditional museographical discourse based on the exhibition of objects, accompanied by text and graphic explanations, is transformed. Thus, it is the protagonists themselves, through their own voices and gestures, who involve us in their history.

The increasingly widespread adoption of Internet-based communication by the heritage world has opened up a wide range of both challenges and new opportunities for memory institutions: already many museums, libraries and archives around the world receive far more 'virtual' visits than the number of visitors coming in person through their doors. The potential is especially strong for working with manifestations of the intangible cultural heritage, since the very nature of the Internet favours the use of diverse techniques for conserving and disseminating supporting information about heritage.

In this context, life stories and similar personal accounts and reminiscences can be considered a significant category of the intangible cultural heritage and the communication of these via the Internet presents both a challenge and an opportunity for memory institutions of all kinds, and can help to build closer links between museums, libraries and archives and their local communities. The Internet is thus creating a new role for memory institutions within the Information Society of the 21st century, helping to ensure they remain important, first rate, social and educational agents into the foreseeable future.

NOTES

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6. See footnote 3.
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8. As a typical example we would mention the National Museum of Science and Technology of Catalonia, (mNACTEC: http://www.mnactec.cat). This conserves all kinds of artefacts related to industrialisation and mechanised working processes, but does not have any programme of oral heritage recording or of presenting the stories, experiences and knowledge of those who worked the machines, or more widely in the industries.
9. http://icom.museum/international/icme.html or http://museumsnett.no/icme/
10. http://www.gedenkstaettenforum.de:8080/icom or http://icom.museum/international/icmemo.htm
11. Boylan, P.J. 2006. The Intangible Heritage: a Challenge and an Opportunity for Museums and Museum Professional Training. *International Journal of Intangible Heritage*, vol. 1, pp. 53 - 65.
12. For example, the ICOM-ICTOP programme during the 2004 ICOM General Conference held in Seoul, examined the professional training implications of conserving and disseminating intangible cultural heritage.
13. At the 26th Annual Symposium of ICOFOM which took place between 4 and 6 October 2004 in Seoul, South Korea, the ICOFOM theme was 'Museology and Intangible Heritage'. See ICOFOM *Bulletin* No. 37: this is available on-line at: http://www.lrz-muenchen.de/~iims/icofom/newsletter37-span.pdf
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15. *ICOM Curricula Guidelines for Museum Professional Development*, available on-line at: http://museumstudies.si.edu/ICOM-ICTOP/index.htm
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25. Network of Museums of the Person: Brazil (http://www.museudapessoa.net),Portugal (http://www.museu-da-pessoa.net), Indiana (US) (http://www.bloomington.in.us/~mop-i/index), Montreal (http://www.museedelapersonne.ca)
26. See footnote 3.
27. *Moving Here: 200 Years of Migration to England* (www.movinghere.org.uk)
28. The partner bodies are MLA Yorkshire, West Midlands Museums Hub, East Midlands Museums Hub, London Museums Hub and the National Museums, Liverpool.
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31. Some of these ideas come from the website *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web* (http://historymatters.gmu.edu/) developed by the American Social History Project/Center for Media & Learning, City University of New York, and the Center for History and New Media, George Mason University which bring together educational resources for the practice of history.
32. For more on this case study see: Goldblum, J., O'Dowd, A., and Sym, T. 2007. "Considerations and Strategies for Creating Interactive Narratives". On-line at *Museums & the Web 2007*. San Francisco. US (http://www.archimuse.com/mw2007/papers/goldblum/goldblum.html)
33. On the relative numbers of 'virtual' versus 'on site' visitors to museums, see for example Hawkey, R. 2004. *Learning with Digital Technologies in Museums*, London:,Futurelab Report 9. To give just one example, in 2006-7 the Museum of the History of Science, University of Oxford, England, received 97,066 visitors through the front door, but 14.6 million 'virtual visits' by 500,700 different people (identified through analysing the IP addresses of the website users), see the Museum's 2006-7 *Annual Report*. (http://www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/about/eAnnualReport06-07.pdf)

The Management of Knowledge of the Intangible Heritage in Connection with Traditional Craftmanship at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Oslo

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ABSTRACT

Following on from a tentative presentation I made at the ICME symposium in Seoul 2004, I would like to demonstrate how cultural diversity can be expressed through traditional knowledge related to craftsmanship, as part of an important intangible heritage that is worthy of recording and preserving. My argument is based on two different case studies: *Hopi* pottery and *Sámi* basketry. I shall concentrate on the people who manage and transmit this vital form of intangible heritage. These ethnographic case studies are founded on first-hand observations in the field. I also describe a collecting policy for ethnographic museums that is based on kin-related collecting, and narratives.

Introduction

According to the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Heritage in 2003, *traditional craftmanship* is one of five specified domains (Article 2). Practicing a handicraft is often a way of life, not merely a means of earning a living. This type of intangible heritage consists in part of inherent knowledge connected to the craft, and partly of the life histories of individuals actively engaged in it. Focusing on intangible heritage is especially useful in gaining as complete an understanding as possible of objects as examples of traditional craftsmanship.

Objects can only speak for a culture if we also know how they were made and used and what meaning is attached to them. In my view, research-based collecting of objects must be accompanied by observations in the field, and by the collection of reminiscences. Or, as Richard Kurin so cogently put it, *intangible cultural heritage exists in communities, not museums* (Kurin, 2004). In the following paper I hope to demonstrate how cultural diversity can be expressed through traditional knowledge related to craftsmanship, a form of intangible heritage which is well worth recording and preserving.

This is a challenge for all museums which aim to record cultural history. My argument centres on *Hopi* pottery and *Sámi* basketry, with particular emphasis on the people who make them.

The forms of intangible heritage which seem to have the greatest bearing on artefacts are 'knowledge systems' and life styles which relate to specific kinds of objects. This raises two questions. 1) What sort of life style involves these objects, and 2) What 'knowledge system' is reflected in making them? (Svensson, 2004)

In anthropological studies we can see a growing interest in examining the revival and transformation of traditional handicrafts into what is often now referred to as 'ethnic art'. *Hopi* pottery from the USA and the basketry of the *Sámi* peoples of the European Arctic are cases in point. In both instances we can see that refined aesthetic forms have been developed. Equally important is the attachment to tradition and the cultural origin of these kinds of objects. By identifying certain families with leading positions in the production of specific craft items, and by following several generations of the same family and recording their life histories, we can learn about the way objects were originally used and begin to understand stylistic changes, the way people manage relevant knowledge gives social life to the objects.

Nampeyo, among the *Hopi* of Arizona, USA, and Asa Kitok, among the *Sámi* of Gallivare, Swedish Lapland, are both women who, almost by accident, revived craft traditions which had been more or less forgotten. They both developed what were formerly ordinary crafts, skills shared by many, in new ways, inspiring members of their own families, and others, to continue them. Nampeyo, was born ca. 1860 and died in 1942, but a fourth generation of her descendants, and even a member of a fifth generation, continue to produce innovative pottery designs based on traditional *Hopi* ware. She is still remembered as a leading *Hopi* potter, and is frequently spoken of as the 'Old Lady Nampeyo'. In the case of Asa Kitok, who died in 1986, we can observe something similar. A third generation of her descendants are still making artistic versions of traditional *Sámi* basketware.

Hopi Pottery

Collecting started about a hundred years ago at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Oslo. In 1904, Ole





Figure 1
NAM PEYO, portrait

Figure 2
One of Nampeyo's pots showing a unique design that has never been repeated, Oslo collection UEM13602. Photo Ann Christine Eek.

Solberg, a research associate, later professor and director of the museum, brought back a representative collection featuring various aspects of the *Hopi* culture, including fifteen pots by Nampeyo.[1] Pottery was in no way his main interest - he was more concerned with aspects of religious practice among the *Hopi*. However, he realised that there was increasing local interest in pottery traditions, and that it was an important element in the material culture of the *Hopi*. Most certainly Solberg was not aware of the role Nampeyo was already playing, there are no records of her from his fieldwork. This means that no 'intangible heritage' information was recorded at the time. The collection is, however, rather extraordinary as it dates from 1900-10, when Nampeyo was making her finest pots.

In order to fill in some of this missing intangible heritage, I have chosen a research strategy based on systematic, kin-related collecting, in other words, pairing objects with recordings of the potters talking about their work and ideas. I have, furthermore, shown photos of our Nampeyo collection to her descendants to find out how they reacted.

In 1980, on my initiative, the museum managed to obtain one object by one of Nampeyo's three daughters, Fannie. On my field trip in 2006 I had the opportunity to see one object by her daughter Annie and two by another daughter, Nellie, all carefully kept within the family, showing they recognised the importance of Nameyo's legacy. In all, the museum is now in possession of no less than twenty-seven different objects, besides the original fifteen made by Nampeyo, from twenty-one of her descendants. From the second generation we have three items, one from each of her granddaughters by Fannie. The bulk of the recent collection comes from the third generation of her descendants in which there are eleven potters. Finally, from the fourth generation we have items from six different individuals who are descended from the families of all three of Nameyo's daughters. By focusing our collecting activity in this way, trying to cover sufficient ground both vertically and horizontally, we are beginning to build a 'biographic collection'.

It is my conviction that a 'biographic collection' of a specific type of object must come from a set of people who are related by blood, because it is through people who have learned the skill from each other, and are similarly concerned about passing that same skill on to future generations, that it is possible to see and understand how knowledge and skills develop over time. There is a specific individual behind each object, who can pass on what they have learnt from Nampeyo's legacy. Most of the potters we met came from the third and fourth generations of her descendants, but they told us that what they know came from Nampeyo, even though they may never have met her, or only have known her when they were small children. This keeps her legacy alive. Recognising that she was the most significant *Hopi* potter of her day, Nampeyo herself was determined not to let pottery making die out. She told her daughters that they should continue *thinking as a potter, practicing as a potter*. To Priscilla, her great grandchild, now aged 82, she stressed the point; *when you grow up I wish you to teach your children what I teach you, because I don't want my knowledge and skill to be lost.* And Priscilla, today considered a real pottery matriarch, has certainly followed Nampeyo's guidance; her daughters are gifted potters.

The *Hopi* potters' 'knowledge system' refers firstly, to clay, where to find it and how to prepare it properly by wetting it. Knowing where the best clay is to be found is usually 'secret' knowledge, only shared by close kin, whereas more people are shown how to examine and judge the clay - by feeling the texture and smelling and tasting it. Clay is not just clay. Apparently the most suitable clays have a slightly sweet taste. The 'knowledge system' also relates to working the clay - moulding it, shaping it in the traditional way by coiling, polishing and sanding it using special stones, painting different designs with natural pigments and finally firing it in the traditional way. This involves heating up a pile of sheep manure mixed with broken pottery shards; this covers the items to be fired. It is a tricky process and the fire has to be watched carefully to make sure the pots come out whole. Those few potters who use kilns to fire their wares are dismissed as not truly following *Hopi tradition*. Immediately after the firing is completed, the pots are sun dried, either outside or indoors; they are then finished products, ready for sale.

It is the modelling and the designs that give identity and meaning to the pottery, or, as one informant put it, *design is a way of understanding our Hopi history and learning about our traditional values*. All the contemporary potters who saw the photos of old Nampeyo's pots in the Oslo collection were astonished by

her designs. In many cases they had never seen anything like them and they will, from now on, be a significant new source of inspiration. I see that sort of reaction as another reason why it is so important to record intangible heritage. The potters studied the pictures enthusiastically and pointed out that the sparse decoration, leaving large spaces undecorated, was typical of Nampeyo and her style. All her symbols clearly represent traditional *Hopi values*, her uniqueness lay in the way she mastered abstract forms, especially in depicting various animals characteristic of the *Sikyatki* design style (Schaaf, 1998:93). Sikyatki is a historical place, northeast of Polacca, which dates from the 14th century. Examples of typical designs from the Nampeyo family of potters are *eagle tail*, *fine-line migration*, and *cloud of rain* (Blair, 1999:92), basic elements that are repeated in endless different forms by present-day potters.

Returning to Nampeyo, she is particularly well-known for her revival of the ancient *Sikyatki* design style. Some of her descendants still use *Sikyatki* patterns in decorating their ware, it means they consider themselves to be true to Nampeyo's legacy, and it stresses their love of tradition. Even if individuals want to develop a personal style, the link to the Nampeyo heritage is always there, they all take great pride in being descended from the famous 'Old Lady Nampeyo'. Her name definitely defines a standard, a heritage built on quality. For it is her style of decoration, and her indisputable sense of quality, more than anything else, which to a great extent have been maintained by her descendants, increasing their self esteem and giving added satisfaction to the pride they take in their craftsmanship.

This brings us to the issue of signing objects. Most potters who today use the name 'Nampeyo', consider it as a brand name; they can use it providing they have a direct link back to Nampeyo. But it can cause problems; only those who, through matrilineal descent, belong to Nampeyo's clan, the Corn Clan, are entitled to sign their items 'Nampeyo'. In fact, Nampeyo herself never signed her pots. However, quite early on the potters resolved this dilemma themselves by using an individually designed symbol for the corn plant. This symbol can be used by all potters belonging to the Corn Clan, thus differentiating Nampeyo's descendants from other potters. In other words, there are rules of conduct about how craftspeople can sign their items - and understanding this is also part of the 'knowledge system'.

So is the use of pottery shards, picked up from the ground, which can be used to create exciting new designs. By applying ancient *Hopi* designs to recently modelled pots, modernity meets history, for quite a few potters this is a connection that is highly valued. Being a potter is not only about making a decent living, equally important is the contribution the potter makes to preserving *Hopi* culture. Nampeyo got inspiration for her designs from shards obtained from excavations at Sikyatki in the late 19th century, shards which she studied closely, but she never used them as a design in their own right unlike a few present day potters, for instance, Dextra and Nyla, both descended from Nampeyo's daughter, Annie, the one who was most faithful to the *Sikyatki* style. This, no doubt, is a further example of how traditional knowledge focusing on craftsmanship is managed. To practically all the potters who are descended from Nampeyo, it is the craftsmanship, working with the hands all the way through, without any mechanical help, that maintains the traditional craft and art they value so highly.

Pottery making relates to *Hopi* life in various ways. Pottery is an integral part of *Hopi* ceremonial practice, and at the same time the symbols that are applied to the pots as decoration are loaded with spiritual power. On the other hand, the Nampeyo family designs include a unique set of personal styles. So traditional knowledge about pottery making amongst the *Hopi* is a constantly transforming and developing 'knowledge system'. And it is only the people actively taking part in pottery making who are able to master such knowledge.

Let me end with some brief remarks about the life style of *Hopi* potters. To be a potter means practising pottery making in all its phases, including marketing. It combines an occupation that is a livelihood, involving careful economic planning, with an important role as bearer and transmitter of tradition. At the same time, all the potters referred to take an active part in the annual cycle of *Hopi* ceremonies, thereby emphasising their *Hopi* identity. Their membership of the tribe is spelled out in rituals, but being related to a legendary figure like Nampeyo is equally important to the potters' sense of identity. Living in a particular place, in this case at the First Mesa, in the village of Hano, or below the mesa at Polacca, originally a trading post, separates most *Hopi* potters from those specialising in other *Hopi* crafts, for instance at Second and Third Mesa. For the potters,

however, there is a close connection to the latter two mesas because today much of the marketing and selling of pottery takes place there. But even for contemporary potters, living at First Mesa, with its long tradition of developing and maintaining *Hopi* pottery, which now stretches back almost 150 years, still feels right.

Part of the potters' way of life involves keeping in contact with various galleries and museum shops which are outlets for their products. These outlets may be situated within the Hopi territory at First, Second or Third Mesa, or at places that attract tourists, like the traditional *Hopi* House at the Grand Canyon, where, during its first season in 1905, Nampeyo and her eldest daughter, Annie, were the first Indian craftswomen to demonstrate their work (Blair, 1999:87). Other notable outlets are in Flagstaff, at the Museum of Northern Arizona, and in Sedona where there are many major galleries to which several Nampeyo's present-day descendants regularly travel.

To understand see the pottery in context, one has to identify those essential aspects of the potters' life style which affect their craft. This is far more than simply describing technical processes, and it, too, is a form of intangible heritage, albeit one which is connected to tangible, material objects.

Sámi Basketry

When my attention was first drawn to *Sámi* basketry work in 1972, Asa Kitok was almost 80 years old. She was still active but was soon to retire, so it was urgent that we learn about her work. Being completely illiterate, she never committed any of her extensive knowledge and experience to paper, it was all passed on by word of mouth. However, at the same time two of her daughters were active and well established craftswomen in their own right. I was more interested in the everyday lives of these people and the stories they told about it, than in the specific objects they produced.

Sámi basketry is a craft tradition which uses birch roots named *tai'vé*; the *Sámi* name for the craft is *tai'vé duodje*[2]. Basketry is a craft which they first learnt from outsiders, but which dates back at least to the 17th century. It soon became a part of the *Sámi* culture, especially because the objects made in this way were so useful.

The 'knowledge system' associated with basketry work is twofold, first, it has to do with all the technical and practical aspects of basket making; and secondly, it relates to the way of life and general philosophy of the craftspeople, either the part they play in reindeer herding and other traditional *Sámi* occupations, or their lives as modern day artists and craftspeople. It is best to record their stories in the field, when one can spend a period of time living and with them and sharing their everyday experiences.

Let us then hear what Asa Kitok (1893-1986)[3] had to say:

Traditionally we made craft items for household needs only in connection with herding reindeer. After around twenty years of complete inactivity concerning basketry I decided to take it up again. The driving force for me was that at least some of my daughters should learn enough to share my pride and interest in this tradition. Thus I became an active basket weaver, tai've duojar, and in my generation I am the only one. Falling back on tai've as an occupation, my life suddenly became easier and more meaningful as I felt I had a mission to fulfil in reviving and carrying on a traditional Sami craft.





Figure 3
Pot made by Nyla, a 4th generation descendant of Nampeyo showing the innovative use of old sherds in a new design thereby connecting tradition with the present, UEM 48608. Photo. AnnCristine Eek.

Figure 4
Pot made by Loren H Nampeyo, a 3rd generation male descendant of Nampeyo, showing images from ceremonial life. Oslo collection UEM48598. 3Photo Ann Christine Eek.

I also saw a challenge in trying out new shapes, but it was important for me to stay with traditional Sami artefacts. I wanted my basketwork to reflect Sami traditions, to convey something of our nomadic life style which is fast disappearing.

Finally, I am very pleased that I started and contributed to the revival of Sami basketry traditions, tai've-toujév. And through my daughters I am convinced this craft will live on.

To sum up, people actively engaged in the art and craft of basket weaving can explain the extensive knowledge and ideas which lie behind their craft, and can tell us about their way of life. We therefore see the baskets in context, in their cultural setting. Among the *Sámi*, baskets were once an essential part of their limited set of utensils, extremely useful in everday life. Today, basketry of ever increasing quality and inventiveness, demonstrates the undeniable vigour of *Sámi* art produced purely for enjoyment and appreciation

From a museum perspective, the collecting of artefacts should always be accompanied by the collecting of knowledge, and the informative part of such knowledge comes from prominent individuals. As examples, the objects collected for the Ethnographic Museum, a *kohpo kårja* by Asa Kitok (1972) and a *mini kisa* by Ellen Kitok (2003)[4], are closely connected, not only because they come from the same family but because of the culture-specific knowledge attached to them. These two artefacts represent *Sámi* basketry tradition as well as modernity, they date from the era when the revived, perfected craft was at its height and they are at the cutting edge of the art of basketry. Knowledge comes together with the object.

Another issue is the distinction between art and craft. Asa Kitok was exceptionally skilled at making exact replicas of ancient utility items, but she also managed to try out new and original designs, although they all showed unmistakable signs of the *Sámi* tradition. She even perfected some of the old coiling techniques practised by *Sámi* women in the distant past. Her daughters, especially Ellen, also show a remarkable mastery of the entire spectrum of *Sámi* basketry craft and art. Some of what Ellen Kitok creates is certainly 'art' and she has had several exhibitions in fine art museums and galleries. Her strength lies in creating bold new designs and techniques, and it reaffirms time and again her unique position as a *Sámi* artist, firmly grounded in *Sámi* traditions and able to exploit traditional knowledge and skills to the full.

The *Sámi* way of life has changed a lot in recent years. In the course of her long life Asa Kitok first lived as a nomad, herding reindeer; then, after her family gave up herding, she lived a settled life based on fishing and gathering; and finally she earned her living as a craftswoman. Her daughter, Ellen Kitok, lived through a similar set of changes. As a child she lived the life of the settled *Sámi*, then, following her mother's legacy she became a craftswoman, and finally she became a fully fledged basketry artist. As life styles have changed, craftspeople have ceased to make utilitarian objects for everyday use and now make beautiful works of art for collectors and museums.

Some might think this would raise issues of authenticity. However, as long as the artist is fully aware that she belongs to a distinct culture and that whatever she produces reflects her cultural background, the items she makes must be regarded as representative of present day *Sámi* culture, consequently they are also authentic. In my opinion, the dynamic process of continuity and change in *Sámi* basketry is best understood as a fusing of tangible heritage with intangible heritage, or as Julie Cruikshank wrote, *both words and things have an ongoing role in reproducing contemporary culture* (1995:28).

Concluding Remarks

Ethnographic objects are material reflections that demonstrate cultural distinctiveness to the outside world. But seen in this way they are simply ethnic artefacts. (Wade, 1985:187). They need to be viewed in conjunction with the testimony of the craftspeople who made them; objects per se do not have a voice.

Both Nampeyo and Asa Kitok were influential pioneers when it comes to reviving craft traditions. Those revivals had a great impact on the development of design within their respective cultures and many still honour their legacies. They were, moreover, equally concerned about the quality of the raw materials they used, whether it was clay or birch roots, and about the importance of knowing the country and where such valuable raw materials could be found.



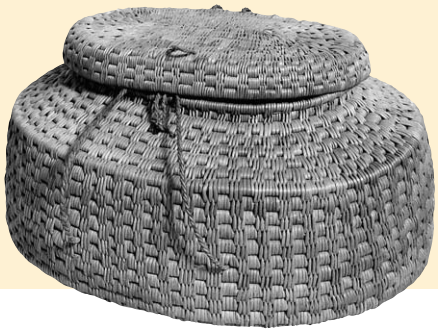


Figure 5
ASA KITOK, portrait

Figure 6
A rather large basket, kohpo karja, a basket for keeping coffee cups, made by Asa kitok in 1972, private collection. Photo. Elisabeth Sletten.

To record the processes of transformation accurately, we used a narrative approach or pursued a policy of biographic/kin-related collecting. In this way, tangible objects were linked to their intangible heritage, and by talking to a sufficient number of people from the communities which produced the artefacts, we learnt how knowledge was handed down through the generations. In *Hopi* pottery as well as in *Sámi* basketry, modernity meets history in the objects currently being made but the link to tradition is always present. Markers of identity, that is, objects representative of a specific culture, are recognisable from their design - modelling in the case of pottery or weaving and shaping techniques in the case of basketry. Being acknowledged as someone whose work plays a part in preserving their cultural heritage was important to both the *Hopi* and the *Sámi* craftswomen.

Finally, both Nampeyo and Asa Kitok are officially recognised as legendary persons in their own right. Nampeyo has been elected into the Arizona Womens' Hall of Fame, and Asa Kitok has recently been honoured by the setting up of an annual grant in her name for people working in *duodje* (2005).

Appendix. Asa Kitok Narrative

In the olden times most women, like myself, were able to make all sorts of useful items, but my primary interest has always been in basketry. This kind of handicraft is based on birch roots and is typical women's work. Traditionally we made craft items for household needs only when we were out herding reindeer.

After around twenty years of not making any baskets, I decided to take it up again. I was the only one who was interested in reviving our basketry tradition, for other women in my generation it was no longer of any interest. The driving force for me was that at least some of my daughters should learn enough to share my pride and concern for this tradition. You can say that I did what I set out to do, as two of my daughters, Margit and Ellen, gradually became leading craftswomen, developing and refining the craft of coiling roots.

I never expected to turn craftwork into a serious occupation, but after a slow start rumours began to circulate and I got more and more orders, especially from Gällivare, both from shops selling *Sámi* handicraft and private collectors. Thus I became an active basketry craftswoman, *tai've duojár*, and in my generation I am the only one. Mostly I kept to making objects we used in our traditional way of life, like cheese moulds, bottles for salt and baskets with a lid for coffee cups, round ones as well as oval ones. All the patterns and coiled techniques were the result of ancient knowledge and practice, I was only a contemporary teacher and custodian of the craft.

To begin with I was surprised to find out that this activity could bring in money -and the prices gradually went up as my name became known. When I had the chance I chose basketry, *tai'vé*, as an occupation because it gave me a reasonable income, which meant I could live a bit more comfortably. My life suddenly became easier, even more meaningful as I felt I had a mission to fulfil to revive and carry on a traditional *Sámi* craft.

This kind of craft means hard work and very long days, one has to be dedicated. To make a living at basketry requires talent, patience and a good head for business. It starts with the hard work of collecting roots out in the woods, and they can often be a long way from home. Early summer is the best time to collect birch roots, then the roots are making sap so it is easier to scrape off the bark. In the autumn the bark stays tighter



Figure 7
A small basket, mini kisa, inspired by the large oval wooden kisa for storage in the nomadic era, made by Ellen Kitok in 2003, UEM 47998. This item contains all original as well as newly created *Sámi* weaving techniques, therefore it can be read as a text on *Sámi* basketry craft and art. Photo. AnnCristine Eek

and the work of cleaning the roots becomes harder. It is, furthermore, important to know where to look for suitable roots for fine pieces. For example, if the ground is stony, one only finds crooked roots which are no use for basketry. In a wood full of birch and pine, where there are a lot of fallen trees, you can collect long, straight roots that are ideal for basketry work.

When gathering roots you need axe, together with a piece of reindeer antler or a pitchfork for potatoes. When I return home I immediately put the roots in cold water and start scraping off the bark with the back of a knife, after that I hang the roots to dry. Next day the same thing, and you have to be prepared to spend several days collecting as there will be a lot of waste when scraping the roots. After the roots are cleaned and dried I sort them according to different thickness and bind them up in rounds for further drying. Dried roots can be stored any length of time before being used. Our main tool is the awl made of bone, usually marrow bone, first cut with an axe then sharpened and finally shaped by a knife. This awl must be made of bone which has been boiled, otherwise it is too fragile. You need several awls with different points depending on the thickness of the roots.

Different kinds of utensils made from birch roots require different coiling techniques. What distinguishes the *Sámi* work from non-*Sámi* basketry is that we usually use a double supporting thread around which we coil what we call the thinner winding thread, with the aid of the awl. The reason for using double supporting thread is that the baskets last much longer, which was important when we used to move around a lot. Another distinction between the *Sámi* and non-*Sámi* basketry is the way in which the object is built up. In the simple technique used by non-*Sámi* one folds the strands inwards, continuing after the bottom part is made. The *Sámi*, on the other hand, turn the object outwards, which means that the side you see, the side with the pattern, is seen on the outside. To have the side you see facing inwards is bad in my view.

One of my latest creations is to make the characteristic single-shafted milk-pail, *nahppé,* of roots, it is an object which was originally made of wood from the round knots of the birch tree. I had often used such a milk-pail, so the inspiration was obvious in a way, as I developed my skill pushing the boundaries for what it was possible to make with birch threads. To make a *nahppé* of roots is far more difficult than to make it of wood, and the most difficult part is to attach the handle to get the proper balance between handle and bowl, like in a wooden milk pail.

Other new items I have made are corks for salt bottles, and the large *kisa*, the oval storage box made of wood. I saw it as a challenge to try out new shapes, but it was important for me to stay with traditional *Sámi* artefacts. I wanted my baskets to reflect *Sámi* traditions, to remind us about the nomadic life style which is well on its way to disappearing. Of course, most of what I made when I became a more or less full time craftswoman, was not for practical use, they were decorative things for a new market of people who are collectors.

Let me conclude. I never thought that I should be the one reviving *Sámi* basketry traditions, *tai'vé-toujév*. But I am very pleased that I started and contributed to its revival. Through my daughters, what they have accomplished, and their teaching of this craft to a new generations of *Sámi* - as well as to interested non-*Sámi* - I am convinced this craft will live on. But there will always only ever be a very few who do it as it is so time-consuming. If you want to live a modern life style it is extremely hard to make a living.

NOTES

1. 1904 is the year when Indian Pottery began to be recognised as art (Blair, 1999:168) Nampeyo, as an early native potter was already appearing at different fairs to demonstrate her craft. The quality of the Oslo collection must be seen in this context.
2. *Duodje* is term describing aesthetic practices within the *Sámi* culture. It refers to high quality based on great skill, in all kinds of Sámi crafts, that which is hand made.
3. This is a short version of an extensive narrative by Asa Kitok which forms an essential part of an earlier monograph *Asa Kitok and her daughters* (Svensson, 1985). This text has subsequently turned out to be an important source of inspiration for various basketry makers descended from Asa Kitok, and others. For a more complete account of this short version see Appendix.
4. The term *mini kisa* refers to a small oval storage box with a lid. It is a most complex basketry item, made entirely of the thinnest threads ever to be found. The artefact shows all the *Sámi* basketry techniques applied to one single object and carries a wealth of symbolism. (Fig. 7)

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Fact, Fiction and Nostalgia: An Assessment of Heritage Interpretation at Living Museums

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Fact, Fiction and Nostalgia: An Assessment of Heritage Interpretation at Living Museums

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore and discuss the role of nostalgia (a concept that is inherently grounded within a psychological framework) in heritage interpretation from both provider and consumer perspectives. Whilst many cultural practitioners recognise the relationship between sentimentality and authenticity, particularly within a folk-heritage context, few have sought to examine the effect this has on the visitor experience. This paper questions visitors' ability to objectively assess objects and experiences at heritage sites, and the role of practitioners in presenting often blurred views of social history that may sometimes negate historical fact. Drawing on case study research at two UK living museums, Blists Hill Victorian Town in Shropshire, England, and the Big Pit: National Coal Museum in Wales, notions of reminiscence, authenticity, myth and intangibility are considered within the framework of the interpretive experience. Findings suggest that the visitor experience is inherently subjective, highly individual and that the concept of intangibility is integral to an understanding of the nostalgia-authenticity debate.

Introduction

Often referred to as 'folk' or 'vernacular' heritage, living museums aim to represent social history and traditional ways of life. Such a concept has existed in one form or another for over a century and first emerged as a response to the perceived threat of the Industrial Revolution on traditional rural lifestyles (Walsh, 1992) although in Britain, it is often the remnants of the

Industrial Revolution, such as redundant buildings and obsolete machinery that have been used to create folk heritage sites. Whilst these objects are clearly worthy of representation as part of Britain's social history, the 'way of life' they present is often questionable. Some writers liken such representations to the ultimate 'simulated experience' suggesting that the vast majority of living museums produce representations of lifestyles that are devoid of conflict and anti-social behaviour, and exist within over-idyllised landscapes (Walsh, 1992). Social structures portrayed in the living museum, suggest that the subordinate classes represented are often a highly stereotyped construction of the middle class imagination (Bennett, 1988). This is reinforced by the misguided notion that the use of the word 'folk'; to describe such classes and the various intangible activities attributed to them suggests at best a sense of the rural, and at worst, connotations of peasantry and patronage. Such a term has subsequently become problematic, since one might argue that it *evolved from an earlier system of colonialist thought and domination* (Seitel, 2001 cited in Van Zanten, 2004: 37) inevitably becoming *tarred with the rustic brush and subordinate to 'proper' history* (Rattue, 1996: 217). The idea that the representation of ordinary people within a museum context is subject to discreet (or even blatant) hierarchical systems of authority therefore persists, suggesting that cultural hegemony is present and manifesting itself through the medium of interpretation.

The growth of social history and the recognition that working class culture was not only worthy of representation but in danger of being marginalised has led to a *consciousness of history from the bottom up* (Young, 2006: 322) promoting *ever more professional forms of heritage commemoration* (ibid.) Yet the words of E.P. Thompson (1963) paraphrased here are negligible in this context, since the history represented in living museums is often little more than just a construct of the hegemonic classes (or in this case, the museum management) - used in varying degrees to perpetrate a highly romanticised view of the working classes that may have more to do with myth than reality. *To say that it was 'myth' is not to say that it was all false; rather it is a montage of memories, an average* (Thompson, 1963, cited in Bell, 1996: 32). The words of Thompson (1963) echo the ideas of Raymond Williams (1961) whose concept of 'selective tradition' suggests that the activity of historical study and reconstruction is in itself merely a process of selection. This process is one which builds an average picture of a past culture based on the records that have survived it and governed *not by the period itself, but by new periods, which gradually compose a tradition* (Williams, 1961, cited in Storey, 1998: 54). Yet, herein lies the problem. The rejection of certain aspects of a previously living culture, and the reliance on memory as suggested by Thompson (1963) to build an accurate appraisal of the past is fraught with ambiguity, particularly within a heritage context. One might argue, however, that this is precisely what heritage, and its custodians, wish to facilitate - an environment where a series of myths can be perpetrated to induce the idea of a cultural tradition and a nostalgia for a 'golden age', thus retaining hegemonic equilibrium.

Perhaps the most unfortunate result of folk representation is that it tends to create a functionalist view of the past related to the myth of the unchanging community (Bell, 1996). The ability that heritage has to stagnate history, particularly within the living museum context is ironic given the fact that attaching the word 'living' to 'museum' suggests a certain degree of activity. Yet such sites present history as frozen in time - a perfect snapshot of a past epoch existing now only in memory, where myths, nostalgia and reminiscence can flourish.

Yet these concepts remain an endemic part of the heritage experience, allowing the visitor to engage with their emotions on an individual level and sense history as if it were their own; both by drawing on and exploring their own emotions empathetically, and by immersing themselves in an historical experience.

Heritage and Nostalgia: a Symbiotic Relationship?

In its most simplistic form heritage can be defined as *something inherited at birth* (Collins English Dictionary, 2005: 399). However, such a narrow definition overlooks the multitude of objects, ideas and traditions, both tangible and intangible, that the word has been applied to, both within the cultural sector and outside of it.

In purely semantic terms, it could be argued that the word 'heritage' is *without definition* (Hewison, 1987: 31), presenting instead a series of vague dichotomies that even extend to its physical manifestations - tangible and intangible. Traditional notions of heritage such as tangible artefacts, buildings and objects of historical significance will always persist. Yet recent developments in cultural heritage management have recognised the importance of intangible heritage both as a form of heritage in its own right and as a supplementary aspect of tangible heritage - providing further depth and context that cannot be achieved by the tangible alone. Thus endangered languages, oral heritage, traditional forms of music and performance, customs, rituals and folklore and *the recognition of communities and groups as those who identify, enact and re-create and transmit the intangible and living heritage* (UNESCO, 2006) are also defined as heritage. Smith (2006) furthers the idea of 'intangibility' by the suggestion that heritage is more complex than simply a term that designates or classifies. Instead, she defines the notion itself as *a mentality, a way of knowing and seeing meaning that all heritage becomes, in a sense, intangible* (Smith, 2006: 54). Heritage, it seems, is without precise definition, or at least it can no longer be defined in terms of its physicality, rather it is an idea, a concept, a phenomenon and a feeling based on a system of values and meanings *that are symbolized··· by those heritage sites or cultural practices* (Smith, 2006: 56). It is unsurprising therefore, that we struggle to define a concept that is inherently dependant on subjectivity, particularly if those meanings and values are constructed both collectively, and by individual engagement. The onus on heritage managers to reflect the intangibility of past experiences accurately, therefore becomes even heavier.

Since heritage can, by its very nature, involve exploring the past by evoking personal/collective meaning as part of an internalised experience, one can begin to see how the psychological concept of 'nostalgia' may have relevance when viewed as an important 'intangible' value. Current psychology conceptualises nostalgia as a positive emotion, involving positivity and even happiness (Davis, 1979, Batcho, 1998 et al). It can be *a self relevant emotion* that *has an affective structure and fulfils crucial functions* (Sedikides et al, 2004: 202) and memory with the pain taken away - a bittersweet longing for a past that no longer exists (Davis, 1979, cited in Goulding, 1999). The element of loss then is endemic to nostalgia, prompting some theorists to highlight the duality of its nature and its ability to bring about discomfort and sadness due to the contrast between a desirable past and an undesirable present (Johnson-Laird and Oatley, 1989, cited in Sedikides, 2004). Such constructs present very specific challenges at intangible heritage sites.

Several theorists suggest nostalgia can be experienced vicariously; a 'simulated nostalgia' (Baker and Kennedy, 1994, cited in Goulding, 1999) evoked from stories, images and possessions, for a past never experienced. Nostalgia therefore, is crucial for the intangible, since it exists purely in the mind - ultimately manifesting itself through memory and reminiscence.

Kavanagh (1996: 1) suggests that:

> *--museums are a meeting ground for official and formal versions of the past called histories -- and the individual or collective accounts of personal experience called memories--*

The audience thus engages in their own construction of heritage through an intangible experience using mentefacts as opposed to artefacts (Dube, 2004). This move from 'object' heritage to 'subject' heritage where *the person sees her/himself once again centred at the heart of cultural interests* (Dube, 2004: 127) is integral to the idea of the living museum, where 'folk' are both represented, interpreted and consequently experienced by the 'folk' who visit.

However, where we rely on subjective emotions in

order to make sense of an experience, discrepancies in visitor understanding must surely occur since:

> *History is interpreted to stimulate nostalgia, idealize the past, and leads to a selective understanding of the past that has more to do with fantasy and fairy tales than veracity* (Laenen, 1989: 89).

The ambiguity that arises from the use of nostalgic representations to provoke such a reaction is the ability to glorify a 'golden age', a problem that is perhaps typified at folk and living museums where visitors are often encouraged to indulge in sentimentality and the imagined and inauthentic landscape is imbued with all that is missing from the modern world (Lowenthal, 1985). This poses the question of whether traditional notions of authenticity are relevant within this context, and if so, how is the intangible authenticated? Indeed, analogous references could be made here with McCannells's (1996) notions of 'staged authenticity' in a tourism context, where he argues that tourists are often happily complicit in the constructed inauthentic as a form of escapism and pleasure.

The Challenges of Authenticity and Representation

This idea of authenticity as a sociological discourse was initiated by MacCannell (1973, 1996) who discussed its relevance within the broader framework of a controversy regarding the relationship between tourism and modernity (Cohen, 2002). MacCannell saw modern people as alienated from their own society and therefore *reality and authenticity are thought to be elsewhere: in other historical periods and other cultures, in purer, simpler life-styles* (MacCannell, 1976, cited in Cohen, 2002: 269). This fits in neatly with writers such as Hewison (1987), Lowenthal (1985, 1998) and Wright (1985) who suggest that feeling nostalgic for the past represents dissatisfaction with the present. Thus reality can be found in the past, leading people to consume everything it embodies.

Early work on authenticity, such as MacCannell's, assumed the existence of some objective authenticity of sites as defined by professionals, the assumption being that the visitor's sense of authenticity will be stimulated by the site (Cohen, 2002). However, later work suggests that *authenticity is not a non-negotiable, given quality, but is in practice often socially constructed* (Cohen, 2002: 270) and as such different people have different criteria for judging the authenticity of a site or object. The amalgamation of different criteria on which to measure authenticity can also promote the idea that culture is complete and unquestionable in its authority. Mauss's concept of 'total social fact' implies that culture should be recognised as a concrete experience where the social, individual, physical and psychic meld into a unique expression, that is in itself total and global (Mauss, cited in Dube, 2004). This suggests that the reality of the 'cultural experience' is borne out of a combination of elements, that includes both the physical (or tangible) and the experiential (or intangible). This raises further questions about the real ability of heritage providers to offer anything which is definitively authentic.

Communicating 'Folk' to 'Folk' - Interpreting the Intangible

Communication of the story of a site, and the people who inhabited it, often causes conflict to arise, especially at 'living museums' where multiple themes are usually present and the desire to enliven the story in some way results in the past often being depicted as much more exciting than it actually was (Howard, 2003). An interpreter may therefore find their strategy incorporating a version of the historic story that emphasises the exciting rather than the ordinary. However, in the 'nostalgia debate', one could argue that it is the mundane that is authentic and what ultimately appeals to people. By using everyday familiarity and a story that everyone can relate to, the interpreter is able to link today's visitor to their historical counterparts.

Hooper-Greenhill (1994: 143) suggests that museums communicate through two main methods - mass communication and interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication such as demonstrations, live interpretation and workshops, enable interpretation

> *---through shared experience, modification or development of the message in light of 'on-the-spot responses', involving many supporting methods of communication (bodily movements, repetitions, restatements, etc.)*

This form of 'enactive' engagement (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994) is essential to the living museum, which displays or

demonstrates intangible activities such as traditional crafts and industrial processes in their working context. At such sites the opportunity often exists for visitors to participate themselves, and become part of the exhibition experience, rather than act as passive bystanders.

The nostalgic memories that visitors share and may transmit to one another can take on some of the characteristics of storytelling, almost constituting 'folklore' in themselves. This is given further credence by the fact that the stories that are prompted are often passed down from one generation to another, developing and taking shape as they go, as traditional folk stories often are. Kischenblatt-Gimblett (2004: 53) suggests that

> *---folklore by definition is not the unique creation of an individual; it exists in versions and variants rather than in a single, original and authoritative form; it is generally created in performance and transmitted orally, by custom or example, rather than in tangible form.*

The belief that performance and example aid folkloric transmission also links to the views of Hooper-Greenhill who suggests that 'doing' may be a more effective mode of engagement than merely passively absorbing information through 'reading' or 'seeing', which in turn is supported by Edson and Dean (1994: 178), who state that: *Most people prefer active, rather than passive information-gathering activities; they desire to do things rather than just read or hear them.*

McIntosh and Prentice (1999: 591) suggest that living museums require cultural competence in terms of visitor understanding, being devoid of written interpretation in the traditional sense such as labels and text. For many visitors, 'cultural competence' can be achieved through *the stimulation of selected memory or nostalgia,* (Walsh, 1992, cited in McIntosh and Prentice, 1999: 591). Understanding is therefore facilitated by the representation of collective memory, into which visitors personal memories can be slotted (McIntosh and Prentice, 1999).

Yet this poses the question of how the interpreter can ever communicate the 'right' message? If every visitor has their own way of understanding a presentation, based on personal experience, then there is an increased likelihood that the message will be interpreted in a way that was unintended, since the interpreter cannot possibly know beforehand what personal experience the visitor is bringing with them. This suggests that nostalgia, rather than being a phenomenon that manipulates and distorts the message is instead an intrinsic part of the understanding process, one which is often uniquely personalised and in itself, intangible.

Exploring Nostalgia and Authenticity in the Living Museum - a Methodological Approach

In this research, a case study strategy was employed for its ability to focus on relationships, processes, and the complexities of a given situation (Denscombe, 2003). Thus the subject of nostalgic representation could be thoroughly scrutinised within an appropriate setting. As previously discussed, this research aimed to (a) assess the meaning and role of nostalgia in heritage interpretation, (b) examine the impacts of nostalgic interpretation on the visitor experience, (c) critique visitors ability to objectively assess the heritage experience presented at certain sites, and (d) the functionality of museum managers in the construction of nostalgic spaces and experiences of intangible heritage. These research aims were explored at two contrasting living museums in the United Kingdom.

The methods used in this study to collect primary data consisted of semi-structured interviews with both visitors and practitioners, supported by participant observation of visitors at the point of interaction with various stimuli. Visitor interview structures were formed to address issues of nostalgia, authenticity and the conflicts between practitioners and visitors. Visitors were asked about their visiting habits and how the interpretation made them feel. Photographic prompts of images of each site were used to elicit conceptual, qualitative responses (without creating bias through pre-formed descriptions). The conflict between practitioners and visitors in terms of authenticity and nostalgia was also explored and interviewees were invited and encouraged to raise any points that may not have been covered. Open questions were used to *explore the topic and to produce a fuller account* (Saunders et al, 2003: 258).

Practitioner interview schedules were also constructed following the topics and principles outlined above. Since it was a key aim of the research to explore the decisions behind the interpretation *and* the way it was delivered, it was necessary to produce two schedules - the first was aimed at those responsible for interpretive planning and the second for those involved in the actual

interpretive delivery. The aim of the first was to establish the context in which the heritage experience was being produced and therefore questions were designed to obtain responses that would provide a frame of reference to the research topic. The second practitioner interview schedule was designed not only to add to this context, but also to determine the day to day reality of interpretation delivery and to analyse organisational consistency.

The research population consisted of adult heritage visitors to the sites over a one month period. The only profiling stipulation was that the interviewee or visitor under observation was over sixteen and a UK resident, due to the risk of cross-cultural perceptions influencing responses to certain questions, and reactions to the stimulus. The sample for visitor interviews was attained by employing convenience sampling whereby visitors were approached at random until the required sample size of twenty five in-depth interviews at each site was reached, making a total of 50 rich semi-structured interview transcripts for analysis. Respondents consisted of lone adults, family groups and adult groups.

For the heritage practitioner interviews, potential interviewees were identified in advance with some assistance from both organisations, and so a purposive sampling strategy was employed to select cases that best enabled the research questions to be answered (Saunders et al, 2003). Focused interviews were carried out at both heritage sites and involved site managers, curators, guides and demonstrators.

In order to triangulate the research methods, observation was undertaken to generate data and substantiate the responses elicited at interview. Participant observation is grounded within a sociological or anthropological standpoint (Denscombe, 2003) and can be used to explore the occurrence of social phenomena within a 'setting', therefore conceptualising the phenomena as 'naturally occurring' (Mason, 2002) without the need for a contrived situation.

A schedule pro-forma was designed in order to record behaviour and reactions with ease. A content-analysis code was devised based on features identified through the ideas and theories presented in the literature relating to the topic (e.g. whether the nostalgic emotion displayed was negative or positive). Observation sessions took place in four different areas of each site, lasting approximately two hours each, after interview data had been collected. During each observation session the behaviour, interaction and verbal responses to the stimuli were noted.

The data analysis used in this study combined a deductive and an inductive approach by utilising the concept of template analysis (King, 1998). As in a general approach to analysing qualitative data, template analysis involves categorising and unitising data *to identify and explore themes, patterns and relationships* (Saunders et al, 2002: 396). In this study, the initial starting point from which to build categories for analysis naturally centred around the key issues under research, therefore the concepts of nostalgia and authenticity became the initial themes from which categories emerged. As themes and interconnections between the data emerged, categories were refined to focus the analysis and aid the building of explanations. A number of themes emerged from the data which suggested a relationship between the concepts under discussion and an analysis of the two separate concepts of nostalgia and authenticity gave rise to theory that was grounded in the data.

Case Study One: Blists Hill Victorian Town, England

Blists Hill Victorian Town is part of a complex of seven museums all administered by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, based in the West Midlands of England, which was established in 1967 to *preserve and interpret the remains of the Industrial Revolution* (Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, 2006). Ironbridge itself is of particular historical importance and is designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site as the birthplace of British industry.

Blists Hill is an outdoor reconstructed village which presents a mixture of original in situ industrial buildings, and buildings that have been rescued from demolition from other locations in the Shropshire area. Aiming to represent a 'typical' Shropshire town from the nineteenth century it consists of domestic buildings such as a school, a bakery, a chemist's shop and a bank, where money can be exchanged for historic currency, and several industrial buildings where traditional practices and crafts are demonstrated by costumed staff who interpret historic life and recite tales of life in the nineteenth century. As there is very little textual interpretation available there is nothing to suggest that Blists Hill is located at a precise date in history, therefore the visitor can create their own timeframe. Although classed as an industrial museum, the focus is undeniably very much on the retail and domestic life of the

nineteenth century folk represented there.

Blists Hill vaguely informs its visitor that it is a *late Victorian working town* (Ironbridge Gorge Trust, 2001: 2). One can safely assume then, that the staff manning the site do not have personal experience of the historical periods represented, and it therefore follows that neither will visitors. This however, had little or no bearing on the site's ability to provide an empathetic experience. The findings at this site suggested that visitor perceptions of authenticity fall distinctly into two separate types those who perceive authenticity in terms of its tangibility and those who perceive it in terms of its intangibility. A minority of respondents defined authenticity along traditional lines, citing objects and buildings as key devices in the construction of an authentic experience:

> *I think all the original equipment, you know like the milliner's sort of shop with the hats... all that helps doesn't it... to recreate a period?* (BH6)

Yet the lack of comments relating to the 'original' tangible features of the site, such as the Brick and Tile Works, or the Blast Furnaces was marked. Moreover, interviewees consistently defined authenticity in terms of the intangible, or whether 'the experience' *felt* real. For the majority of interviewees the intangible aspects of their visit, such as being able to experience the past through 'doing' what historical figures may have done, or engaging with interpreters, were the crucial determining factors in what constituted an authentic experience, for example:

> *Well I like the role play... if you get face to face with them and you react with them then its really really good... you get a real feeling for it* (BH5)

Thus 'people' or 'folk' are integral to the authentic experience, either through providing access to the past in the form of face to face interpretation with a guide or demonstrator, or by physically experiencing historical life. Moreover, being able to relate to the experiences of the people portrayed in the interpretation in this way promotes the impression that an authentic experience has been achieved. Empathy is facilitated and evoked by the emotions that the site induces, through nostalgia and a sympathetic reaction to the 'folk' stories that are represented and interpreted on site. Interestingly, visitor responses to nostalgia were recorded in both case studies, regardless of the sites' personal relevance to the visitor, which in itself appears to support the existence of 'vicarious nostalgia' (Baker and Kennedy, 1994, cited in Goulding, 1999). The nostalgia concept manifested itself in this research as three different reactions to the stimulus of the interpretive content and can be modelled in Table 1 below:

Nostalgic Response	Indicative Behaviour/Commentary
Regressive	Wishing for the Past
Progressive	Yardstick for Comparative Progress
Sympathetic	Regret at human living/working conditions

Table 1
Nostalgic responses to intangible heritage

The minority of those who displayed 'regressive' or 'progressive' reactions to the stimulus were more or less completely divergent in their responses, either wishing a return to times past (generally prompted by recognition of a familiar object or item) or by using nostalgia as a tool to consider progress and development and appraise the wider progress of society. Although a 'progressive nostalgic' presents somewhat of a contradiction, it does perhaps go some way to supporting the idea that nostalgia can be *self relevant* (Sedikides et al, 2004), therefore acting as a catalyst for self or societal improvement. However, the majority of responses were expressed in terms of sympathy for the way of life portrayed in the interpretation. What was interesting is that responses were overwhelmingly framed in terms of issues relating to 'people', 'folk' and the 'way they lived', often in the negative, for instance:

> *It's all very well for us today to go down in there and say 'oh it's really pretty' and 'it's really wonderful' but, I mean, it's damn hard, it really was* (BH14)

This reaction was displayed in the majority of responses and recognition of the negative aspects of domestic and folk life goes some way to disputing the claim that visitors can be duped into accepting comforting and nostalgic images of the past (Uzzell, 1998). What is clear is that as long as 'people' are available to engage and interact with, an authentic experience can in fact be achieved through the fact that the visitor can empathise with folk life as if it were their own. By leaving the period presented in the vaguest possible terms, it allowed the visitor to create their own sense of 'time past' based on their life histories and personal experience.



Figure 1
Case study one

The evocation of personal memory in this context also presents itself in the way that visitors felt that they not only understood history by relating it to experiences from their own life, but can feed those experiences back into the interpretation by relating and transmitting them to other visitors and staff. The experience therefore becomes a collective activity, suggesting that authenticity can not only be *socially constructed* (Cohen, 2002: 270) but has a dual aspect - an internal aspect that relates what is presented to personal experience, and an external aspect that promotes empathy through collective remembrance and memory sharing.

By encouraging visitors to tell their own stories and recall memories, sites can also challenge the concept of museum hegemony since

> *--- the complex relationship between the audiences and the actors challenges the notion of the museum as a place where passive visitors inevitably consume a dominant ideology* (Bagnall, 2003: 95)

However, if the visitor's stories are chosen to be integrated into a site's interpretation, it might be reasonable to assess critically the reliability and validity of such resources. One heritage practitioner noted that:

> *--- you can bring your own stories into it but also what visitors give you as we-- their memories --a lot of them we can actually pass on -- we learn from visitors, but what you learn from visitors, you need to be very careful with, its not always the true fact, you know memories play tricks on you as well.* (BH, P2)

Such practices could be regarded as either an enhancement of the site's commitment to present multiple truths and variations of history, or as a distortion of the framework of historical fact around which the interpretation should be built, although Blists Hill actively encourages its visitors to consider *a broader perception* (BH, P3)

Case Study Two: Big Pit (National Coal Museum, Wales)

Big Pit: National Coal Museum was a working mine until it closed in 1980 due to the declining coal industry, re-opening again in 1983 as an open air living museum (Wales Underground, 2006). The main focus of the museum is an underground tour led by former miners, and the site has since been designated and funded as the national mining museum for Wales (Thompson, 2005). Where Blists Hill uses costumed interpreters whose characters are based on supposition and secondary data, Big Pit employs real ex-coalminers as interpreters and guides. Drawing on their personal experiences, they provide, arguably, an experience with an authentic message about the realities of heavy industry. Those interpreting Big Pit chose to restore all the buildings already there, regardless of age, thus portraying the complete history of the site and creating a link from past

to present. This also helped to avoid the static presentation of time that is unavoidable with the recreation of a community from one period. The recent inclusion of an exhibition detailing the lives of miners, their families and the communities they lived in, presents a human side to juxtapose the industrial. Traditional mining maintenance and blacksmithing practices are still undertaken at Big Pit, and visitors are encouraged to partake in an underground tour to understand the realities of the mining industry.

Evidence of nostalgia was also procured at Big Pit, which is perhaps explained by the fact that the historical period represented is still relatively recent and therefore actively remembered by a larger majority of visitors. It was also typified by pride and admiration for the past, rather than the simple happiness of recognition evoked by regression, meaning that it took on the principles of a 'progressive' reaction (see Table 1):

> *-- nostalgia-- for the things past --It's sad that the landscape has changed so much, but its all part of moving on and progress isn't it?* (BP 13)

Visitors to Big Pit particularly expressed a 'sympathetic' reaction towards the site's portrayal of women, children and the mining conditions, and observation of visitors to the Pit Head Baths Exhibition provided evidence that was consistent with this reaction. Visitors were typically heard commenting:

> *Look at the poor children in that photo, they look so miserable* (BP, People of Coal)

What was particularly surprising at Big Pit was a lack of recognition of the tangible aspects of the site as 'authentic'. The whole site was a working mine until recently and therefore the buildings that visitors have access to are genuine industrial remnants. Yet the knowledge that Big Pit did exist as a mine and is not artificially reconstructed had minimal bearing on its ability to be identified as 'authentic' by visitors. As at Blists Hill, visitors consistently defined authenticity in relation to the intangible aspects of their experience, such as being able to 'do' and experience what miners did. By drawing on the personal experiences of the mining folk, visitors can access the intangible *mentefacts* of history as suggested by Dube (2004). In light of this, one might again suggest that empathy is crucial to the living museum, where stories of folk and people are intrinsically linked to the history of the site.

One might infer that an empathetic reaction is more prevalent at Big Pit, where visitors are given the opportunity to engage with 'real' remnants of history through the mining folk who still work on site. However, since this type of response was also noted at Blists Hill, with costumed interpreters cited as contributing to the authenticity of the site just as consistently as at Big Pit, it could be suggested that authenticity is not entirely dependent on the availability of genuine historical artefacts. This has wide ranging implications for future interpretive decisions at Big Pit, as it serves as an early indicator that when there are no longer 'real' miners to provide interpretation, they could in fact be replaced by performers, without completely negating the authenticity of the experience for the visitor.

Practitioners should, on some level, be aware of the different phenomena operating within these sites in order to fully understand the visitor experience and deliver successful interpretation. This was certainly the case at Big Pit where steps have been taken to ensure that visitors can relate to, and therefore empathise with, what is presented. The recognition that some exhibits have failed to engage the visitor due to their lack of an empathetic theme is clear:

> *--- we wanted to show the scale of the colliery underground -- we've got a flip book that tells you all that information and this mine model that would show it in -- total failure -- we came to the conclusion, the reason people didn't engage with it was there was no people in it* (BP, P2)

Through interview it also transpired that a major difficulty at Big Pit is making such a technical subject accessible to a wide audience. However, the staff also recognise that this can be achieved by integrating the stories of the people who worked in the mines into their interpretation so, as the Curator explained,

> *-- the display areas were planned to be as 'human' as possible; we used images of people everywhere and oral history quotes as 'hea dlines' above the graphic panels* -- (Thompson, 2005 :16)

Thus, even where tangible interpretation is a mainstay of the interpretive content and strategy, there was a

consciousness of the use of people to enhance empathy. Employing miner-interpreters also has its disadvantages. Their closeness to the subject matter and the knowledge that they have lived the culture being represented means they are in a strong position to reject the message or version that the museum may wish them to interpret. Clearly, the idea of *selective tradition* suggested by Williams (1961) is evident here, with the recorded culture beloved of curators often conflicting in a very real sense with the lived culture of the mining folk. The following response, which demonstrates this issue, arose in an interview with a miner-guide, who was asked whether he believed that what he had learnt through job training and the interpretation the site delivers is consistent with historical fact:

> *it's on the right level -- but after saying that -- anything that I don't agree with in what we're told, I simply won't accept it because if something's not right, I don't agree.* (BP, P1)

Personal experience in this context not only enhances authenticity, but also questions it. Employees as well as visitors are able to share memories collectively which encourages a sense of validation and acceptance as the same interviewee explains:

> *--- they shut the mines and took my work away from me so I didn't have a job -- but now I'm here, and I can talk about it as if it were real -- when we go underground, very often we sit down for five minutes and have a little talk amongst ourselves -- it's nice* (BP, P1)

To reiterate, by employing human interest themes and delivering them in an accessible form, either tangibly through familiar objects and buildings, or intangibly through verbal interaction with on-site interpreters and physically experiencing historical life by engaging in activities, visitors can gain an emotional response that promotes empathy through strength of feeling. In turn, this leads the visitor to believe they are experiencing the authentic as the emotions stimulated by the interpretive content are 'real'.

Visitors can also, in a sense, be objective about what they see by also recognising the negative aspects of history. However, this is still born out of a subjective experience based on strength of feeling and emotion. This presents a dilemma, but more importantly poses the question of whether visitors in this context will ever be able to be objective about an experience that hinges entirely on their ability to sense and understand historical life as if it were their own. As Smith (2006) suggests, heritage is not only the physical experience of 'doing', but also the emotional experiences of 'being'. The use of personal experience within this context was discovered across the data set and was integral to an understanding of the relationship between nostalgia and authenticity.

Conclusion

Nostalgia in the living heritage context can, as discussed, be classified as 'regressive' , 'progressive', and 'sympathetic'. The findings in this research suggest that nostalgia is an emotion capable of evoking a desire for the past *and* a desire for the future, whilst also promoting



Figure 2
Case study two

feelings of empathy. This leads the visitor to believe in the reality of their experience, therefore achieving individualised-authenticity. For visitors, nostalgia offers the opportunity to access our historical past and either use it as a resource to contemplate change and development as a society, or to go back to a past that feels safe, comfortable and unchallenging. However, as Ashworth (2005) suggests: *The past and future are imagined entities: only the present is real,* therefore nostalgia cannot illuminate either, it merely fosters the conditions for an 'experience', and whether that experience feels authentic or not rests with the individual.

With this in mind, we can therefore argue that authenticity is the negotiable concept that Cohen (2002) suggests, if it is dependent on the visitor's own ability to relate to the represented theme. The idea that authenticity is a negotiable concept has also been recognised within the framework of cultural tourism and heritage studies in the past (Gable and Handler, 1996, Bendix, 1997). Yet previous studies have neglected to consider authenticity in the light of the nostalgic response. This paper suggests that the concepts of nostalgia and authenticity are more closely related than perhaps previously recognised, particularly within an intangible heritage context. The perception of the visitor experience as 'authentic' is almost entirely dependent on the existence of nostalgia to promote the correct conditions for empathy and strength of feeling to be realised. Consequently, a belief in the reality of the experience is fostered, leading nostalgia to become a psychological resource for perceived authenticity.

By using human interest themes as interpretive devices, visitors can connect to the past by relating the lives of those being portrayed to their own. Drawing on the work of Ang (1985, cited in Bagnall, 2003), visitors can experience 'emotional realism' through the medium of heritage sites, in order to gain an authentic experience, and this has been strongly proved in this research.

What is clear here is that the success of living museums lies in 'people' either by employing real life characters with whom visitors can interact through intangible heritage activities/folklore, or by telling their own stories through more static forms of interpretation. The ability to engage the visitor in a psychologically complex way disputes the claim that the heritage visiting public are a passive homogenous mass (Hewison, 1987). Clearly this issue would benefit from further research, as it constitutes an interesting discussion in its own right, but it does raise an important point regarding the ambiguity of 'dealing' in the past. Is it appropriate for heritage providers to enhance the experience in such a personal way? These findings suggest that interpreters of living museums and folk life may have little choice if they are to make the subject understandable and accessible to all. One of the single most interesting results to emerge from this study shows the overwhelming framing of heritage 'meaning' within the personalised context of the intangible. Authenticity and nostalgia are dynamic, volatile, site-specific indicators that colour the heritage experience. Ultimately, real questions of *meaning* can only be answered at the level of the individual; authentic truth, however, is another matter.

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Short Papers, Reports & Reviews

Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Pacific: a Brief Report on Recent Progress at the Australian Museum

Leslie Christidis, Vinod Daniel, and Paul Monaghan



Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Pacific: a Brief Report on Recent Progress at the Australian Museum

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on an intangible cultural heritage forum held at the Australian Museum, Sydney, in 2007. Forum participants, including representatives from Fiji, Guam, New Zealand, Norfolk Island, Palau, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Yap as well as members of Sydney's heritage community, contributed to a debate on the question of what the UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* 2003 means in practical terms to Pacific countries and how the Australian Museum might work in partnership with them in their safeguarding efforts. Importantly, the forum allowed the interests of traditional knowledge holders to be considered and for a number of concerns to be noted. These concerns are also of significance for those working more broadly in the field of intangible cultural heritage and are reported below.

The Australian Museum's Intangible Cultural Heritage Program focuses on collection-based research (linking intangible and tangible heritage) and digital access/exchange programmes for both Indigenous Australia and the Pacific region.

In May 2007 an ICOM Australia Museum Partnerships Program (IAMPP) funded workshop was held at the Australian Museum, Sydney. This *Emerging Cultural Centres Workshop* brought together representatives of cultural institutions from across the Pacific region to discuss, over five days, topics relating to capacity building for emerging cultural centres and museums. Topics ranged from architectural and funding issues to questions of collections management and intellectual property.[1] Participants included sponsored

representatives from Fiji, Palau, Samoa, Tonga, and Yap, as well as invited representatives from Guam, New Zealand, Norfolk Island and Vanuatu.

At a special session of the workshop, a forum entitled *Intangible Progress: Myth or Reality?* provided an opportunity for the gathered cultural leaders, as well as members of Sydney's wider heritage community, to share their views and experiences in relation to their efforts towards safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. One of the main aims of the forum was to open up discussions on how the Australian Museum, in partnership with Pacific institutions and communities, could best activate its collection of 60,000 ethnographic objects relating to the Pacific to assist in the revitalisation of traditional practices.

This short report focuses on a number of concerns articulated by, or on behalf of, traditional knowledge holders that pose methodological challenges for those engaged in developing safeguarding practices. Indeed, a clear view emerged during the forum that globalisation continues to have powerfully damaging effects on traditional knowledge and skills in the Pacific and that we must guard against employing safeguarding practices that, ironically, contribute to this decline.

To borrow a biological metaphor, safeguarding culture requires an ecological approach: attention should be paid to the underlying structures and relationships that support traditional knowledge and expressions of culture (as living culture) and not simply to particular instances or de-contextualised expressions of traditional knowledge *per se*. In this way, safeguarding may be less about recording physical descriptions of objects or performances than about recording the meanings surrounding an object or verbal expression (why, when, how, by whom, for what purpose is it made/uttered?), for example. This is an essential point for those interested in revitalising cultural practices and is a crucial consideration for sustainability. One can reproduce an object based on a photograph or a museum visit, but the complex web of knowledge and social contexts for its use may be irretrievable. In other words, there is a need for establishing procedures that produce 'thick' inventories.[2]

An added complexity here, however, is that while there is a felt need for thick inventories to be produced (by cultural mapping, for example) there is, among some in the Pacific, an accompanying, and perhaps growing, fear of fossilisation. The perception of fossilisation of aspects of their living culture has been experienced by traditional knowledge holders who have seen foreign archival accounts of cultural practices gain an aura of authority far in excess of that given to the living tradition in their communities. While the underlying concepts of 'purity' or 'authenticity' are derided in the anthropological literature, in some spheres (legal, political) these concepts are still influential. The important point to make here is that the effects of these perceptions may deter traditional knowledge holders from putting their knowledge on paper (or in digital format). It would be a mistake, however, to see this simply as a legacy of the colonial past. At least one forum participant complained that information gathered in villages was being held at a national cultural centre with little feedback reaching the village level. The upshot is that more work on raising awareness about the processes of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is needed to alleviate such concerns. This work would highlight the dynamic interrelationship between cultural diversity and change. It would also promote the view that partnerships are

necessary for cases in which foreign museum collections are activated for use in cultural revitalisation, and that a more open and sharing process, both between institution and traditional knowledge holders, is required.

It is exceedingly rare these days to attend a cultural heritage meeting in which the question of adequate protections for ownership and use of intellectual property and traditional knowledge does not come to the fore. It is not possible within the constraints of this short report to capture the depth of concern among participants and the complexities of legal-ethical issues involved in this rapidly evolving sphere of practice. However, it is possible to relay the emerging view that it is axiomatic that one cannot safeguard traditional knowledge without paying proper regard to the intellectual property rights of the people who hold this knowledge. From an institutional point of view, one must at the very least set proper conditions of access and use for cultural heritage materials, otherwise one potentially contributes to the destruction of that which one purports to protect. At the village level there may be problems with gathering traditional knowledge for non-traditional contexts, such as inventory making or cultural mapping. If traditional systems of knowledge transfer are operating in a particular location, then a dilemma will inevitably arise if on the one hand there is no-one suitable to receive knowledge (when for example the young men or women have gone to an urban centre for employment), and on the other hand the only option is to pass the knowledge to people who would normally not be allowed to receive it (cultural mapping fieldworkers from a neighbouring village or region, for example). More generally, problems associated with the non-traditional transfer of traditional knowledge are exacerbated by the rise of new electronic technologies, which may be seen as allowing written (or digitally recorded) accounts of traditional culture to be spirited away from the local level to increase someone else's riches (as with the case of *Deep Forest's* 'Sweet Lullaby').[3] This issue of the emergence of new technologies greatly outrunning the development of standards and protocols to protect traditional knowledge and intellectual property is of increasing concern to institutions and communities across the board.

An important aim of the forum was to promote and explore the role museum collections can play in cultural revitalisation. It was pointed out during the author's presentation that while *safeguarding intangible cultural heritage is* a new term at the Australian Museum, it is not a new activity. For many years researchers have taken copies of poorly documented objects back to source communities to gather contextual knowledge surrounding those objects, and from the1980s the museum has been a leader in the field of repatriating objects. More recently the museum has broadened its support for Pacific communities engaged in cultural revitalisation by hosting collection research visits by Pacific cultural leaders. In 2003, Sophie Nemban visited the museum to research women's material culture from the island of Erromango (Vanuatu). After returning home she conducted a seriesof workshops on traditional bark cloth making. Within three years approximately 150 bark cloths had been made as result of these efforts. During her research visit Sophie 'discovered'a traditional design of which she had heard but had never seen. In 2006, Chief Uminduru Jerry Taki, also from Erromango in Vanuatu, visited the museum to research men's material culture; the museum holds the world's largest collection of early material from Erromango. Chief Jerry gave detailed information on 100 objects in the Sie and Bislama languages (including their names, functions, and designs). Many objects were photographed for him, and he returned home with a number of DVDs and copies of voice recordings. While the DVDs were subsequently shown and aroused great interest on the island, details of their role in revitalisation activities are yet to be reported back to the museum.[4] The museum has transferred the intangible heritage to its collections databases for use by community members, researchers, and the general public. During 2007, the museum increased its support for source communities and traditional knowledge holders by expanding our *Visiting Cultural Leaders Program* and engaging with diaspora communities in Sydney.

Throughout the forum, the need for the museum and source communities to work together in researching the histories of objects was repeatedly raised. The Pacific visitors brought with them their vision of living culture; as one commented, *we live our culture, we don't lock it away*. Another participant remarked that researching the museum collections allowed them to *take back food to eat*. With memoranda of understanding with Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) and by unlocking our collections, the Australian Museum is confident that we are heading in the right direction.

NOTES

1. The workshop received seed funding from the National Museum of Australia and AusAID. The Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA) played a role as a partner organisation.
2. See Geertz, Clifford, 1973. 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture'. *In The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays,* New York, Basic Books, pp. 3-30.
3. Feld, Steven, 2000. 'A Sweet Lullaby for World Music', *Public Culture* 12(1), pp.145-171.
4. Kirk Huffman did much of this collection-based research relating to Vanuatu.

Brief Biographies of the Authors

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Amareswar Galla educated in both south and north India including at the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, Galla provides strategic cultural leadership in Australia and the Asia Pacific Region as the Professor of Museum Studies at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. He is also the Chairperson of the ICOM Cross Cultural Task Force and the Founding Convener of the Pacific Asia Observatory for Cultural Diversity in Human Development in partnership with several bodies including UNESCO. With an outstanding research and development record, he gave keynote addresses to academic, professional and community conferences in over fifty countries and worked on 'fingers in the dirt' community museum building projects in Asia, Africa and Australia, during the past three decades.

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Instructions to Contributors

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Aims and Scope of the Journal:

The *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* aims to play a role as a comprehensive academic journal on the intangible heritage, as defined in Article 2 of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003. It seeks to promote international communication about research, investigation, conservation, transmission, performance and communication, and the exchange of ideas among scholars, researchers, professionals, educationalist and other practitioners and bodies involved in the intangible heritage sector.

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The anonymous referees' reports and recommendations are forwarded to the author (or the corresponding author who originally submitted it, in the case of joint or multiple authorship). The revised manuscript taking into account, or otherwise responding to, the referees' comments and recommendations, should be returned as soon as possible. After this, a final decision on publication will be made by the Editorial Board.

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Boylan, P.J. 2000. Museums, the Community, and Development. pp. 8 - 27 in ICOM Korea, *International Symposium for the Establishment of Korean Industry and Technology Museum.* (Seoul: Korean National Committee of ICOM)

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