

| Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production¹

by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

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Intangible heritage

Since the Second World War, UNESCO has supported a series of world heritage initiatives, starting with tangible heritage, both immovable and movable, and expanding to natural heritage, and most recently to intangible heritage.² Although there are three separate heritage lists, there is increasing awareness of the arbitrariness of the categories and their interrelatedness. *Tangible heritage* is defined as 'a monument, group of buildings or site of historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological or anthropological value' and includes such treasures as Angkor Wat, a vast temple complex surrounding the village of Siem Reap in Cambodia; Robbin Island in Cape Town, where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for most of the 26 years of his imprisonment; Teotihuacan, the ancient pyramid city outside Mexico City; and the Wieliczka Salt Mine, not far from Cracow, which has been mined since the thirteenth century.

Natural heritage is defined as ‘outstanding physical, biological, and geological features; habitats of threatened plants or animal species and areas of value on scientific or aesthetic grounds or from the point of view of conservation’ and includes such sites as the Red Sea, Mount Kenya National Park, the Grand Canyon and, more recently, Brazil’s Central Amazon Conservation Complex.³ Natural heritage initially referred to places with special characteristics, beauty, or some other value, but untouched by human presence, that is, as wilderness, but most places on the natural heritage list – and in the world – have been shaped or affected in some way by people, an understanding that has changed the way UNESCO thinks about natural heritage. At the same time, natural heritage, conceptualized in terms of ecology, environment, and a systemic approach to a living entity, provides a model for thinking about intangible heritage as a totality, rather than as an inventory, and for calculating the intangible value of a living system, be it natural or cultural.

Over several decades of trying to define *intangible heritage*, previously and sometimes still called folklore, there has been an important shift in the concept of intangible heritage to include not only the masterpieces, but also the masters. The earlier folklore model supported scholars and institutions to document and preserve a record of disappearing traditions. The most recent model seeks to sustain a living, if endangered, tradition by supporting the conditions necessary for cultural reproduction. This means according value to the ‘carriers’ and ‘transmitters’ of traditions, as well as to their habitus and habitat. Whereas like tangible

heritage, intangible heritage is culture, like natural heritage, it is alive. The task, then, is to sustain the whole system as a living entity and not just to collect ‘intangible artefacts’.

UNESCO’s efforts to establish an instrument for the protection of what it now calls intangible heritage dates from 1952. The focus on legal concepts, such as intellectual property, copyright, trademark and patent, as the basis for protecting what was then called folklore, failed – 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 (writing, notating, drawing, photographs, recordings).⁴

During the 1980s, legal issues were distinguished from preservation measures and in 1989 the UNESCO General Conference adopted the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore.⁵ Dated 16 May 2001, the *Report on the Preliminary Study on the Advisability of Regulating Internationally, through a New Standard-setting Instrument, the Protection of Traditional Culture and Folklore* significantly shifted the terms of the 1989 document. First, rather than emphasize the role of professional folklorists and folklore institutions to document and preserve the records of endangered traditions, it focused on sustaining the traditions themselves by supporting the practitioners. This entailed a shift from artefacts (tales, songs, customs) to people (performers, artisans, healers), their knowledge and skills. Inspired by approaches to natural heritage as living systems and by the

DEFINING THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Japanese concept of *Living National Treasure*, which was given legal status in 1950, the 2001 document recognized the importance of enlarging the scope of intangible heritage and the measures to protect it. The continuity of intangible heritage would require attention not just to artefacts, but above all to persons, as well as to their entire habitus and habitat, understood as their life space and social world.

Accordingly, UNESCO defined intangible heritage as: All forms of traditional and popular or folk culture, i.e. collective works originating in a given community and based on tradition. These creations are transmitted orally or by gesture, and are modified over a period of time through a process of collective recreation. They include oral traditions, customs, languages, music, dance, rituals, festivities, traditional medicine and pharmacopoeia, the culinary arts and all kinds of special skills connected with the material aspects of culture, such as tools and the habitat.⁶

And, at the March 2001 meeting in Turin, the definition further specified: Peoples' learned processes along with the knowledge, skills and creativity that inform and are developed by them, the products they create and the resources, spaces and other aspects of social and natural context necessary to their sustainability; these processes provide living communities with a sense of continuity with previous generations and are important to cultural identity, as well as to the safeguarding of cultural diversity and creativity of humanity.⁷

This holistic and conceptual approach to the definition of intangible heritage is accompanied

by a definition in the form of an inventory, a legacy of earlier efforts at defining oral tradition and folklore: The totality of tradition-based creations of a cultural community, expressed by a group or individuals and recognized as reflecting the expectations of a community in so far as they reflect its cultural and social identity; its standards and values are transmitted orally, by imitation or by other means. Its forms are, among others, language, literature, music, dance, games, mythology, rituals, customs, handicrafts, architecture and other arts.⁸

Elsewhere in the *Implementation Guide*, terms like 'traditional,' 'popular,' and 'folk' situate oral and intangible heritage within an implicit cultural hierarchy made explicit in the explanation of 'What for, and for whom?': 'For many populations (especially minority groups and indigenous populations), the intangible heritage is the vital source of an identity that is deeply rooted in history.'⁹

Neologisms like First Peoples (rather than Third World) and *Les Arts Premiers* (rather than Primitive Art) similarly preserve the notion of cultural hierarchy, while effecting a terminological reshuffling of the order, as can be seen with special clarity in the reorganization of museums and collections in Paris, including the dissolution of the Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens and Musée national des Arts et Traditions Populaires, redistribution of the collection of the Musée de l'Homme, and creation of two new museums – Musée du Quai Branly, which is dedicated to the 'arts and civilizations of Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas' in Paris, and the Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, in

Marseilles.¹⁰ Since April 2000, highlights of the African, Oceanian, and American collections that will eventually be shown at the Musée du Quai Branly are being showcased for the first time in the Louvre's Pavillon des Sessions, which has become the museum's *Salles des arts premiers*.¹¹ The presence of these works at the Louvre is taken as a long-awaited answer to the question posed in 1920 by the art critic Félix Fénéon, '*Iront-ils au Louvre?*'¹²

These developments at the national level are consistent with UNESCO's efforts to mobilize state actors 'to take the necessary measures for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory'.¹³ These measures reveal how different the professional heritage enterprise is from the heritage that is to be safeguarded. However much these measures are intended to *safeguard* something that already exists, their most dramatic effect is to build the capacity for something new, including an internationally agreed-upon concept of heritage, cultural inventories, cultural policy, documentation, archives, research institutes, and the like. In a word, safeguarding requires highly specialized skills that are of a different order from the equally specialized skills needed for the actual performance of Kutiyattam or Bunraku or Georgian polyphonic song. Accordingly, UNESCO's role is to provide leadership and guidance, to create international agreement and co-operation by convening national representatives and experts, and to lend its moral authority to the consensus they build in the course of an elaborate and extended process of deliberation, compromise, and reporting. This process produces agreements, recommendations, resolutions, and provisions.

The resulting covenants, conventions, and proclamations invoke rights and obligations, formulate guidelines, propose normative and multilateral instruments, and call for the establishment of committees. The committees are to provide guidance, make recommendations, advocate for increased resources, and examine requests for inscription on lists, inclusion in proposals, and international assistance. Recommendations are to be implemented at both national and international levels. State parties are to define and identify the cultural assets on their territory by creating inventories. They are to formulate heritage policy and create bodies to carry out that policy. They are expected to establish institutions to support documentation of cultural assets and research into how best to safeguard them, as well as to train professionals to manage heritage. They are supposed to promote awareness, dialogue, and respect through such valorizing devices as the list.

The List

On 18 May 2001, after decades of debate over terminology, definition, goals, and safeguarding measures for what had previously been designated 'traditional culture and folklore' – and before the *Report on the Preliminary Study on the Advisability of Regulating Internationally, through a New Standard-setting Instrument, the Protection of Traditional Culture and Folklore* was presented to the UNESCO Executive Board – UNESCO finally announced the first nineteen 'Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity'.¹⁴ What is the nature of such lists, and why, when all is said and done, is a list the most tangible outcome of decades of UNESCO meetings, formulations,

DEFINING THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

reports, and recommendations? Some of those involved in the process of developing the intangible heritage initiative had hoped for cultural rather than metacultural outcomes; they wanted to focus on actions that would directly support local cultural reproduction, rather than on creating metacultural artefacts such as the list.

James Early, Director of Cultural Heritage Policy for the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, and Peter Seitel, Project Co-ordinator for the UNESCO/Smithsonian World Conference, reported their disappointment that 'UNESCO's institutional will became focused on adopting the Masterpieces programme as UNESCO's sole project in a new convention on ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage)' that would make the convention a tool for 'national governments to proclaim the richness of their cultural heritage', rather than focus on the culture bearers themselves.¹⁵ The Call for Action in the proceedings of the 1999 Smithsonian/UNESCO meeting on Safeguarding Traditional Cultures specified a wide range of actions that could be taken with and on behalf of culture bearers.¹⁶ While acknowledging the importance of enhancing cultural assets, the Call for Action did not stop there, nor did it specifically recommend the creation of a list of the Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

Not only is each word in this phrase highly charged, but also the phrase itself suggests that heritage exists, as such, prior to – rather than as a consequence of – UNESCO's definitions, listings, and safeguarding measures. I have argued elsewhere that heritage is a mode of cultural production that gives the endangered or outmoded

a second life as an exhibition of itself.¹⁷ Indeed, one of UNESCO's criteria for designation as a masterpiece of intangible heritage is the vitality of the phenomenon in question: if it is truly vital, it does not need safeguarding; if it is almost dead, safeguarding will not help.

Consistent with the stated criteria, this list of the first nineteen 'Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity' recognizes communities and cultural manifestations not represented on the tangible heritage list, including the oratory, performance, language, and ways of life of indigenous peoples and minorities.¹⁸

Responses to UNESCO's first proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity have been mixed. In an article entitled 'Immaterial Civilization,' which appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, Cullen Murphy, noting the campaign of Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio to have pizza declared a masterpiece of world heritage, found the UNESCO list underwhelming: 'These are indisputably worthy endeavors. But the overall impression is of program listings for public television at 3.00 a.m.' Murphy proceeded to offer candidates of her own for the 2003 list. They included the white lie, the weekend, and the passive voice, among others.¹⁹ Such ironic statements index the process by which life becomes heritage and the contemporaneous (those in the present who are valued for their pastness) becomes contemporary (those of the present who relate to their past as heritage).²⁰

While the white lie, the weekend, and passive voice would not pass the test of being

endangered masterpieces, such commentaries are a reminder that a case could be (and has not been) made for the intangible heritage of any community since there is no community without embodied knowledge that is transmitted orally, gesturally, or by example. By making a special place for those left out of the other two World Heritage programmes, UNESCO has created an intangible heritage programme that is also exclusive in its own way (and not entirely consistent with its stated goals). Thus, the Bolshoi Ballet and Metropolitan Opera do not and are not likely to make the list, but Nōgaku, which is not a minority or indigenous cultural form, does make the list. All three involve formal training, use scripts, are the products of literate cultures, and transmit embodied knowledge from one performer to another. Moreover, Japan is well represented on the other world heritage lists and the Japanese Government has been protecting Nōgaku, a Japanese theatre form, as an intangible national property since 1957.

By admitting cultural forms associated with royal courts and state-sponsored temples, as long as they are not European, the intangible heritage list preserves the division between the West and the rest and produces a phantom list of intangible heritage, a list of that which is not indigenous, not minority, and not non-Western, though no less intangible.²¹

World heritage lists arise from operations that convert selected aspects of localized descent heritage into a translocal consent heritage – the heritage of humanity.²² While the candidates for recognition as *Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* are defined as traditions – that is, by mode of transmission (orally, by gesture, or by example) – world heritage as a

phenomenon is not. As a totality – as the heritage of humanity – it is subject to interventions that are alien to what defines the constituent masterpieces in the first place. World heritage is first and foremost a list. Everything on the list, whatever its previous context, is now placed in a relationship with other masterpieces. The list is the context for everything on it.²³

The list is also the most visible, least costly, and most conventional way to ‘do something’ – something symbolic – about neglected communities and traditions. Symbolic gestures like the list confer value on what is listed, consistent with the principle that you cannot protect what you do not value. UNESCO places considerable faith – too much faith, according to some participants in the process – in the power of valorization to effect revitalization.²⁴

In addition to maintaining the list, UNESCO also selects and supports proposals for various programmes and projects, ‘taking into account the special needs of developing countries.’²⁵ Such projects include documentation, both the preservation of archives and the recording of oral traditions; the creation of research institutes and organization of scientific expeditions; conferences, publications and audiovisual productions; educational programmes; cultural tourism, including the development of museums and exhibitions, restoration of sites, and creation of tourist routes; and artistic activities such as festivals and films.

The festival is the showcase *par excellence* for the presentation of intangible heritage, and the

DEFINING THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

2002 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, which was dedicated to the Silk Road, is a prime example of putting policy into practice.²⁶

The 2002 festival was a *tour de force* in the way that it broke out of the pattern of national representation and staged subnational cultural expressions within the supranational framework of a trade route, even though performers and craftspersons still understood themselves to be representing the countries from which they had come. The festival also confounded easy distinctions between traditional and contemporary, high and low, by including the Tokyo Recycle Project, which makes contemporary fashion by recycling garments that clients provide, and Yo-Yo Ma's unique Silk Road Ensemble, which performs new works commissioned specially for it.

The success of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival – and the ongoing critical reflection that the centre for Folklife and Cultural Heritage brings to the festival and related undertakings – have prepared the centre for its recent leadership role in shaping the UNESCO initiative on intangible and cultural heritage.²⁷ The centre has been trying to move UNESCO from a masterpiece orientation towards supporting local communities so that they can sustain cultural practices. The centre, directed by Richard Kurin since 1987, brings theoretical sophistication to the enterprise. The Smithsonian Folklife Festival is considered exemplary and has set a high standard for the presentation of tangible and intangible heritage, to use UNESCO language, within the limitations of the festival as a metacultural form.

Heritage is metacultural

Whereas the list of *Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* is literally a text, the 2002 Smithsonian Folklife Festival brought living practitioners before a live audience and, in so doing, foregrounded the agency of those who perform the traditions that are to be safeguarded. Unlike other living entities, whether animals or plants, people are not only objects of cultural preservation but also subjects. They are not only cultural carriers and transmitters (the terms are unfortunate, as is 'masterpiece'), but also agents in the heritage enterprise itself. What the heritage protocols do not generally account for is a conscious, reflexive subject. They speak of collective creation. Performers are carriers, transmitters, and bearers of traditions, terms which connote a passive medium, conduit, or vessel, without volition, intention, or subjectivity.

'Living archive' and 'library' are common metaphors. Such terms do not assert a person's right to what they do, but rather their role in keeping the culture going (for others). According to this model, people come and go, but culture persists, as one generation passes it along to the next. But, all heritage interventions – like the globalizing pressures they are trying to counteract – change the relationship of people to what they do. They change how people understand their culture and themselves. They change the fundamental conditions for cultural production and reproduction. Change is intrinsic to culture, and measures intended to preserve, conserve, safeguard, and sustain particular cultural practices are caught between freezing the practice and

addressing the inherently processual nature of culture.

Central to the metacultural nature of heritage is time. The asynchrony of historical, heritage, and habitus clocks and differential temporalities of things, persons, and events produce a tension between the contemporary and the contemporaneous, as discussed above, a confusion of evanescence with disappearance, and a paradox – namely, the possession of heritage as a mark of modernity – that is the condition of possibility for the world heritage enterprise.

Heritage interventions attempt to slow the rate of change. *The Onion*, a humour newspaper in the United States with a national readership, published an article entitled ‘U.S. Dept. of Retro Warns: “We May Be Running Out of Past”’.²⁸ The article quotes U.S. Retro Secretary Anson Williams: ‘If current levels of U.S. retro consumption are allowed to continue unchecked, we may run entirely out of past by as soon as 2005’ and ‘We are talking about a potentially devastating crisis situation in which our society will express nostalgia for events which have yet to occur.’ In support of these predictions, the article explains that ‘The National Retro Clock currently stands at 1990, an alarming 74% closer to the present than ten years ago, when it stood at 1969.’ As the retro clock speeds up, life becomes heritage almost before it has a chance to be lived and heritage fills the life space.

While the categories of tangible and intangible heritage distinguish things from events (and from knowledge, skills, and values), even things are events.

First, as existential philosopher Stanley Eaveling has remarked, ‘A thing is a slow event.’ This is a perceptual issue. The perception of change is a function of the relationship between the actual rate of change and ‘the windows of our awareness’.²⁹ Things are events, not inert or deteriorating substance, in other senses as well. A thing can be an ‘affecting presence’, in the words of Robert Plant Armstrong.³⁰

Second, many things are renewable or replaceable under specified conditions. Every twenty years, the wooden sanctuaries at Ise Jingu, a sacred shrine in Japan, are rebuilt. The process takes about eight years, and the shrine has been rebuilt sixty-one times since the first rebuilding in 690. Known as *shikinen sengu*, this tradition involves not only construction, but also ceremony and transmission of specialized knowledge: ‘The carpentry work is carried out by about one hundred men, the majority of whom are local carpenters who set aside their usual work for a privileged period of two to four years. No nails are used in the entire structure. Although the plans exist for every structure, the master carpenters must remember and pass on to apprentices their expert knowledge of how to put together the complex joints, using ancient and unfamiliar tools.’³¹ This shrine represents ‘2,000 Years of History, Yet Never Gets Older than 20.’ Ise Jingu is a slow event. Even heritage sites engage in regular rebuilding. At Plimoth Plantation, near Boston, buildings are torn down and rebuilt regularly in order to make the heritage clock stand still in the year 1627. At the time, the buildings would have been seven years old. Since the heritage site is older than the settlement that it represents – Plimoth Plantation

DEFINING THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

is about thirty years old as of this writing – rebuilding is a way of synchronizing the heritage clock with the historical clock.³²

Third, intangibility and evanescence – the condition of all experience – should not be confused with disappearance. This is a case of misplaced concreteness or literal thinking. Conversations are intangible and evanescent, but that does not make the phenomenon of conversation vulnerable to disappearance. Peggy Phelan's now classic essay, 'The Ontology of Performance,' takes up the idea that 'Performance's being . . . becomes itself through disappearance.'³³ This issue has prompted a considerable theoretical literature and debates on the ontology of art and, in particular, of performance. Philosopher Nelson Goodman distinguishes between paintings or sculpture, which are autographic, (the material instantiation and the work are one and the same) and performances (music, dance, theatre), which are allographic (the work and its instantiations in performance are not one and the same). It could be said that the tangible heritage list is dedicated to the autographic and the intangible list to the allographic.³⁴

Fourth, as those creating world heritage policy now realize, the division between tangible, natural, and intangible heritage and the creation of separate lists for each is arbitrary, though not without its history and logic. Increasingly, those dealing with natural heritage argue that most of the sites on the world natural heritage list are what they are by virtue of human interaction with the environment. Similarly, tangible heritage, without intangible heritage, is a mere husk or inert matter. As for intangible heritage, it is not only embodied,

but also inseparable from the material and social worlds of persons.

'Africa loses a library when an old man dies,' a quotation from Hampaté Bâ, appears on the opening page of UNESCO's Intangible Heritage website.³⁵ While affirming the person, the library metaphor confuses archive and repertoire, a distinction that is particularly important to an understanding of intangible heritage as embodied knowledge and practice. According to Diana Taylor, the repertoire is always embodied and is always manifested in performance, in action, in doing.³⁶ The repertoire is passed on through performance. This is different from recording and preserving the repertoire as documentation in the archive. The repertoire is about embodied knowledge and the social relations for its creation, enactment, transmission, and reproduction. It follows that intangible heritage is particularly vulnerable, according to UNESCO, precisely because it is intangible, although the historical record does not necessarily bear this out. Though the situation today is of a different order, Australian Aborigines maintained their 'intangible heritage' for over 30,000 years without the help of cultural policy. In contrast with the tangible heritage protected in the museum, intangible heritage consists of cultural manifestations (knowledge, skills, performance) that are inextricably linked to persons. It is not possible – or it is not as easy – to treat such manifestations as proxies for persons, even with recording technologies that can separate performances from performers and consign the repertoire to the archive.

While there is a vast literature on the heritage industry, much of it dealing with the

politics of heritage,³⁷ less attention has been paid to the enterprise as a metacultural phenomenon in its own right. The great pressure to codify the metacultural operations, to create universal standards, obscures the historically and culturally specific character of heritage policy and practices. In the case of tangible heritage, is the goal to restore an object to its original state to honour the artist's intention; to present an object in pristine perfection, untouched by time; to treat the object or site as a palimpsest by retaining, as much as possible, evidence of historical process, as at Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney, Australia, and in processual archeology; to distinguish visually between the original material and what has been done to conserve or restore the object and to make restoration reversible; or to view the material object itself as expendable.³⁸ As long as there are people who know how to build the shrine, it not necessary to preserve a single material manifestation of it, but it is necessary to support the continuity of knowledge and skill, as well as the conditions for creating these objects, as is the case at the Ise Jingu shrine in Japan, discussed above. The form persists, but not the materials, which are replaced.

International heritage policy of the kind developed by UNESCO shapes national heritage policy, as can be seen from recent efforts in Vietnam and South Africa, among others, to create legal instruments for the protection of cultural heritage. There is also movement in the opposite direction. The concept of national living treasure, which informs UNESCO's intangible heritage programme, was developed decades earlier in Japan and Korea.

Finally, the possession of heritage – as opposed to the way of life that heritage safeguards – is an instrument of modernization and mark of modernity, particularly in the form of a museum: 'To have no museums in today's circumstances is to admit that one is below the minimum level of civilization required of a modern state.'³⁹ While persistence in old life ways may not be economically viable and may well be inconsistent with economic development and with national ideologies, the valorization of those life ways as heritage (and integration of heritage into economies of cultural tourism) is economically viable, consistent with economic development theory, and can be brought into line with national ideologies of cultural uniqueness and modernity. Fundamental to this process is the heritage economy as a modern economy. For this and other reasons, heritage may well be preferred to the pre-heritage culture (cultural practices prior to their being designated heritage) that it is intended to safeguard. Such is the case at the Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii, a Mormon operation where, since 1963, students at Brigham Young University-Hawaii 'keep alive and share their island heritage with visitors while working their way through school'.

Such cases point to the troubled history of museums and heritage as agents of deculturation integration, as the final resting place for evidence of the success of missionizing and colonizing efforts, among others, which preserve (in the museum) what was wiped out (in the community). Today's museums and heritage interventions may attempt to reverse course, but there is no way back, only a metacultural way forward.

DEFINING THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

| NOTES

1 This text is an excerpt from 'World Heritage and Cultural Economics' forthcoming, in *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, edited by Ivan Karp and Corinne Kratz, with Gustavo Buntinx, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Ciraj Rassool, Lynn Swajja, and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto. Reproduced with the authorization of the editors. The project has been supported by the Rockefeller Foundation.

2 Several histories of UNESCO's heritage initiatives have been written. For a particularly thoughtful account, see Jan Turtinen, *Globalising Heritage: On UNESCO*. SCORE Rapportserie 12, 2000.

3 'Defining our Heritage,' <http://www.unesco.org/whc/intro-en.htm>. Date: 15/01/2003.

4 WIPO (the World Intellectual Property Organization) is making efforts to deal with these issues as are such organizations as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community in Noumea, New Caledonia. See their *Regional Framework for the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Expressions of Culture*, 2002.

5 UNESCO, Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore adopted by the General Conference at its twenty-fifth session, Paris, 15 November 1989, http://www.unesco.org/culture/laws/paris/html_eng/page1.shtml.

6 UNESCO, Intangible Heritage, last updated 24 March 2003, http://www.unesco.org/culture/heritage/intangible/html_eng/index_en.shtml. This formulation is close to the one in UNESCO's 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore.

7 Quoted in UNESCO, *Report on the Preliminary Study on the Advisability of Regulating Internationally, through a New Standard-setting Instrument, the Protection of Traditional Culture and Folklore*. UNESCO Executive Board, 161st Session, 161 EX/15, PARIS, 16 May 2001. Item 3.4.4 of the provisional agenda, paragraph 26, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001225/122585e.pdf>.

8 UNESCO, Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, op. cit.

9 Intangible Heritage, UNESCO, http://mirror.us.unesco.org/culture/heritage/intangible/html_eng/index_en.shtml.

10 See Musée du Quai Branly, <http://www.quaibrantly.fr/?R=2> and Le projet [Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée], <http://www.musee-europemediterranee.org/projet.html>.

11 See Press kit, 'Inauguration du pavillon des Sessions, Palais du Louvre', April 2000, Ministère de l'éducation Nationale, de la Recherche et de la Technologie, <http://www.quaibrantly.fr/IMG/pdf/doc640.pdf>.

12 Félix Fénéon et al, *Iront-ils au Louvre?: Enquête sur des arts lointains* [1920], reprint edition, Toulouse, Éditions Toguna, 2000.

13 This account is based on the most recent draft, as of this writing, of the intangible heritage convention: Consolidated Preliminary Draft Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage, third session of the Intergovernmental Meeting of Experts on the Preliminary Draft Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris, UNESCO Headquarters, 2–14 June 2003.

14 UNESCO Press kit, 'Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity', http://www.unesco.org/bpi/intangible_heritage/ and UNESCO, Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, 18 May 2001, http://www.unesco.org/culture/heritage/intangible/masterp/html_eng/declar.shtml.

15 James Early and Peter Seitel, 'UNESCO Meeting in Rio: Steps toward a Convention,' in *Smithsonian Talk Story*, No. 21, Spring 2002, p.13.

16 Peter Seitel, ed, *Safeguarding Traditional Cultures: A Global Assessment of the 1989 UNESCO Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore*, Washington, D.C., Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution, 2001.

17 See Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Destination Museum' in *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*, pp.131–76. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998.

18 See Peter J. M. Nas, 'Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Culture: Reflections on the UNESCO World Heritage List', in *Current Anthropology* Vol. 43, No. 1, 2002, pp.139–48.

19 Cullen Murphy, 'Immaterial Civilization', in *The Atlantic Monthly* Vol. 288, No. 2, 2001, pp.20–22. This gesture is reminiscent of Horace Miner's classic essay *Body Ritual among the Nacirema*, *American*

Anthropologist, Vol. 58, No. 3, 1956, pp. 503–7. Nacirema is, of course, American spelled backwards.

20 I am adapting a distinction made by Johannes Fabian in *Time and the Other How Anthropology Makes its Object*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1983.

21 Good intentions create unintended distortions also familiar in arts funding in the United States, which divide the cultural field so that Western classical and contemporary art is funded through such categories as Dance, Music, Theatre, Opera, Musical Theatre, Literature, and Design, Visual Arts divisions. At the National Endowment for the Arts, everything else goes to Folk and Traditional Arts or Multidisciplinary Arts, which includes 'interdisciplinary work deeply-rooted in traditional or folk forms that incorporates a contemporary aesthetic, theme, or interpretation' (<http://www.nea.gov/artforms/Multi/Multi2.html>). At the New York State Council for the Arts (<http://www.nysca.org>), the comparable divisions are Folk Arts ('living cultural heritage of folk art') and Special Arts Services (support for 'professional arts activities' in and for 'African/Caribbean, Latino/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander).

22 On the distinction between descent and consent, see Werner Sollors, *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1988.

23 On the list as an instrument of historic preservation, see Mark J. Schuster, *Making a List and Checking It Twice: The List as a Tool of Historic Preservation*, CPC [Cultural Policy Centre at the University of Chicago] Working Paper 14, 2002.

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25 Article 18, 1. Consolidated Preliminary Draft Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage.

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27 See Richard Kurin, *Reflections of a Culture Broker: A View from the Smithsonian*, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997.

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32 See Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Plimoth Plantation', in *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage*, pp.189–200. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1998.

33 Peggy Phelan, 'The Ontology of Performance: Representation without Reproduction', in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, pp.146–66. New York, Routledge, 1993, and reactions to her position by Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, London/New York: Routledge, 1999. On the convergence of 'art performance' and 'performance art,' see Noel Carroll, 'Performance', *Formations* 3, 1, 1986, pp.63–81, and Paul Schimmel and Kristine Stiles, *Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object, 1949–1979*, Los Angeles, New York: The Museum of Contemporary Art Thames/Hudson, 1998. On documentation as an art practice, see Henry M Sayre, *The Object of Performance: the American Avant-Garde Since 1970*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989. Others have explored the relationship of performance (and intangible heritage) to recording media, not only as a way to capture or document, but also as an art practice, catalyst of cultural production, and basis for theorizing orality. See Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Folklore's Crisis', in *Journal of American Folklore* Vol. 111, No. 441, 1998, pp.281–327.

DEFINING THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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11. Harvest tradition, Bulgaria. Culture is not static; it is continuously produced and re-created by people.