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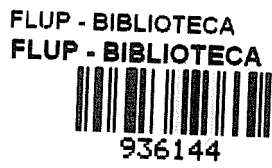*Évora, Portugal*
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The contemporary way to protecting heritage or, the only way for heritage to serve the development of communities

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ABSTRACT: The adoption of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* by UNESCO's General Conference, in October 2003, has an intention of cultural awareness-raising and protection that can only be rewarding for those who care about the integrated sustainability of communities by virtue of its implicit extensive and vigorous notion of culture. However, the conceptualization of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) especially through a paradigm of safeguarding and archive, that embodies a preservationist ethos, has in itself potential limitations that urge us to challenge. In this paper, I defend a re-conceptualization of the ICH that reformulates the interaction between the traditional and the contemporary. Then, the implications of that are analysed in terms of Museum activities, offering some strategies so that the museum institution is no longer the Mausoleum referred by Theodor Adorno [1967], celebrating only the survival of the past. On the contrary, the Museum must also be able to contribute towards the flourishing and renovation of contemporary cultural contexts, thus becoming an effective local development agent.

INTRODUCTION

UNESCO's normative action in the field of cultural protection began in the 1960s and its first concrete effects became visible in 1972, with the adoption of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. This Convention sought to actively promote the protection and value of a "cultural heritage" identified as architectural, monumental, sculptural and pictorial objects, cohesive assemblies of built structures found in natural sites with human activity, of renown historical, aesthetic and anthropological value (Unesco, Paris, 1972). The far too restrictive definition of cultural heritage established in the *Convention* was to justify the many subsequent measures in the defence and value of cultural assets the definition of which would not fit the 1972 protection legislation. In 1989, the General Conference adopted the *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional and Popular Culture*. In 1997, the programme for *The Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity* was launched, followed by the 2001, 2003 and 2005 Proclamations – sponsored by the Japanese Director-General of Unesco, Koïchiro Matsuura – which designated a total of 90 forms of intangible heritage around the world as Masterpieces, corresponding to other "cultural spaces" and "forms of popular and traditional expression". Finally, in October 2003, based on a draft document primarily intended to be a working document, but which gradually became a proposal voted and approved, the 32nd Session of UNESCO's General Conference, held in Paris, adopted the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (ICH), which entered into force on 20 April 2006 and was espoused by Portugal in August 2008.

   The scenario I have described above, even if succinctly, shows the existence of an international movement striving for the safeguarding of cultural heritage through the enactment of laws, and an increasing awareness of its more intangible scope, to the detriment of an initial sense, especially monumental and material. In particular after the approval of the 2003 *Conven-*

tion, the ICH concept has prevailed in both international scene and national institutional and legislative discourses, with experts and decision makers of UNESCO national commissions preparing and supporting the making of lists and action plans that aim to safeguard such heritage. By critically reflecting on the configuration of the notion of ICH idea as official preservation discourse, this text aims to re-conceptualize it by reformulating the subsequent understanding of past and present relations in such a way that heritage can effectively participate in the sustained development of communities.

Intangible Cultural Heritage: new or old discourse?

In a book that is already described as a classical, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, David Lowenthal (1985) clearly points to an emerging notion of heritage as the expression of the modern preservationist ethos. Whilst a rebellion against the inherited tradition and, therefore, an acceleration of history embodied in a chasm between the past and the present, Modernity has given rise to the cult of preservation and pervasive nostalgia: "we preserve because the pace of change and development has attenuated a legacy integral to our identity and wellbeing (…) because we are no longer intimate enough with that legacy to rework it creatively" (1985: XXIV). Translated as the desire to save everything that may be lost, this modern preservationist mentality draws its key-themes on the ideas of loss and trauma, recovery and revitalization.

As a dominant ethos of Modernity, this is also the backdrop that guides and shapes the performance of UNESCO, whose normative and legislative activities tally with the current emergence of the international community as the agent responsible for safeguarding the heritage of the past which runs the risk of being destroyed and/or forgotten. This is visible in the actual context in which the institution's activities began. Set up in the aftermath of the 2nd World War to promote international cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture and communication (www.unesco.org), the normative action of UNESCO began in the 60s, triggered by the problem of relocating the Nubian Monuments to avoid being submerged by the construction of the Aswan dam (Hassan, 2007). The 1972 *Convention*, generally known as the *Convention of World Heritage*, was the result of the subsequent internationalization of the successful awareness and protection campaign on the Nubian monument heritage. One of the many authors (Cleere, 2001; Meskell, 2002; Butler, 2007; Rowlands, 2007) who have addressed the implications of preservationist ethos on the understanding of world heritage, D. Byrne (2004), on the matter of the recommendations presented in the 1972 *Convention*, commented on how the regulatory procedures are based solely on an "etic preservation" (idem:19)[1] which is far too removed from any local understanding of heritage; quite the reverse, they promote the scientific discourse on heritage as its official discourse.

As we know, the notion of ICH was invented to overcome the constraints presented in the 1972 *Convention* and the creation of this new concept meant the emergence of a new discourse on heritage. We therefore have to analyse the extent to which the new understanding is able to overcome the former, harmonizing that preservationist tendency and encompassing, in fact, not only monuments and sites but also practices, beliefs and skills that need to be sustained and perpetuated by the respective "practicing communities" (Deacon et al., 2004).

If one looks closely at the full version of the 2003 *Convention*, it is quite clear that the notion of ICH is, in large measure, an attempt to provide answers for the gaps detected before, not only the previous neglect of cultural manifestations, such as music, traditional arts or even language, but also the now acknowledged key role played by the local communities in transmitting that intangible heritage. This heritage, as such, does not exist by itself, but it needs to be mediated by human intervention so that it can exist.[2]

According to the definition expressed, the ICH refers to a certain distributed and flowing knowledge that does not need to manifest itself in pompous or spectacular ways, yet it is the valuable expression of people's creativity and of the live nature of cultural scopes of their existence.

However, despite the relevance of such principles, it is undeniable that the discourse is still dominated by the spectre of loss and the threat of disappearance. Based on this idea, not only are the key-words once used repeated, but the desire and pressing need to safeguard have now reached areas not affected so far. The idea of "endangered heritage" still remains a core issue in the new narrative of heritage, and the main agents responsible for the threat are "globalization",

"social change" and the "lack of financial resources": "The processes of globalization and social transformation, alongside the conditions they create for renewed dialogue among communities, also give rise, as does the phenomenon of intolerance, to grave threats of deterioration, disappearance and destruction of the intangible cultural heritage, in particular owing to a lack of resources to safeguard such heritage." (UNESCO, 2003, Preamble)

Any anthropologist will say that the displacement of intangible cultural heritage from its original territory can not be seen as harm per se, and if anything needs to be preserved it is essentially the social process, the only way to ensure the continued creation of values. In this sense, more than being a victim, all types of heritage maintenance processes will intersect with processes such as globalization or tourism, and can come through revitalized from the subsequent cultural hybridism resulting therefrom. To view the growing movements of the world population, technological innovation or the expansion of urban centres as posing a risk for the intangible cultural heritage, on account of the disruptions they would cause to continuity between generations, is to subscribe a notion of culture that does not withstand it being seen as a living thing, dynamic, significant and continuously recreated by the community of practicioners. Given the above, one can but realize that the conceptualization of ICH within UNESCO's international discourse is based on an obvious contradiction which shows the maintenance of the usual preservationist ethos. On the one hand, there is an apparent acknowledgement that the ICH is constantly being changed and recreated as it is transmitted through the generations, and that the requirements established by UNESCO for the Member States are meant to promote and ensure the widest possible participation of communities, groups and individuals in the safeguarding and management of their heritage (Article 15). Yet, on the other hand, the focus is particularly on the need to protect and preserve such heritage, which finds itself under the imminent danger of current social contexts, which are considered as being capable of banishing its practices and meanings. In other words, the conceptualization of the ICH leads to a distinct structural contradiction, if not a conflict, between a vision of social dynamics in the present, obviously linked to specific time, space and the respective community of practicioners, and a vision of conservation of the past which inevitably immobilizes it and discards its actors.

The basic idea that not preserving a cultural asset means a traumatic loss, translating the recurring preservationist paradigm, is expressed in various ways, for instance the idea of "safeguarding" which supports the new narrative of live heritage. If, on the one hand, the term "safeguard" has a less strong and static connotation than the notions of preservation or protection, and its use in the 2003 *Convention* is mixed with references to "flourishing" and "sustainable development" (Blake, 2006: 40), the terminology features of the new discourse remit to a notion of cultural heritage linked mostly to what is at stake, and the fear of loss is the key instrumental reason for the development of the corresponding safeguarding actions. The wording of the norms on the *Masterpieces of Humanity* is also indicative of how the same idea is prominent. The notion of the ICH was recognized in the World Conference on Cultural Policies, held in Mexico in 1982,[3] in which the department of "non-intangible heritage" was created, and which became part of the new definition of culture and cultural heritage. However, the programme for *The Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity*, launched in 1997, stresses, among the selection criteria, that with regard to the space or cultural expression for inscription on the respective list, "the risk of its disappearance (…) has to be proved, due to (…) the processes of rapid change or urbanization and acculturation" (Unesco, 2004). Non-compliance with this essential criterion on the risk of disappearance was the reason why the Portuguese application presented in 2002 was rejected, since the five cultural items to be listed as Masterpieces – among which the Fado – were not defined as cultural manifestations most threatened with extinction (Ramos, 2005)[4]. On the same issue, the 2003 *Convention*, as the guiding document on ICH safeguarding measures at international and national level, defines the making of lists as an important measure, and only according to it can the inscription of intangible heritage in the "ICH of Humanity List" or in the "ICH Urgent Safeguarding List" (Articles 16 and 17) be accepted. In the case of Portugal, the Institute of Museums and Conservation is the body responsible for defining and implementing the national cultural policy on the safeguarding of ICH. It has defined as its main and most pressing task to complete the national list of ICH and the development of scripts and information systems to support the free online access to the materials in order to satisfy the criteria set by UNESCO, that is, the need for the widest possible participation of communities, groups and individuals. We will all agree that the safe-

guarding of this heritage depends on accurate and valuable documentation and records, in particular regarding awareness; yet, at the same time, it should be noted that no survey of heritage, no matter how thorough it is, can guarantee its renovation, let alone its participated renovation.

The preservationist tendency conveyed by the institutional narrative of the intangible heritage is, therefore, unequivocal. As the official national and international preservation discourse, the conceptualization of the ICH leads to the maintenance of a paradigm of safeguarding and archive that does not merit the label of new, in the true sense of the word. Despite the efforts to avoid previous standardized and universalist approaches, the 2003 *Convention* still shows what Guido Pigliasco (2009: 122) soon called "19th century strategies inspired by the brothers Grimm (who collected folk stories of German peasants)". Nonetheless, if it isn't possible deny that the protectionist movement sponsored by UNESCO is the expression of the habitual preservationist ethos, my intent with this paper is not, however, to simply denounce that fact. More than that, my intent is to pinpoint the need to go beyond the idea of preservation in the sense of preserving past survival, showing how challenging the dominant narrative of heritage can be crucial to make the notion of ICH operational and effective, as an instrument for the development of the notion of continuity and cultural identity of communities and individuals. With this in mind, I suggest a re-conceptualization of ICH in order to reformulate the interaction between the traditional and the contemporary.

The Contemporary in the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The most significant issue that requires an answer to provide us with alternative heritage and museum practices other than simple preservationist ones is if, inevitably, the "preservation precludes other uses of the past" (Lowenthal, 1985: XXIV), and the establishment of any other "creative connections with the past" (idem: 364) is inevitably tormenting. Only a straightforward negative answer will allow to overcome the contradiction mentioned before in the official discourse, in that the ICH is constant change and recreation and, at the same time, to pinpoint the current social contexts as endangering the practices and significances of such heritage. There are two basic positions underpinning the contradiction: on the one hand, the ICH seen as basically focused on traditions on the brink of extinction and, on the other hand, given that imminent danger, the idea that the survival of its practices and meanings depends on the norms established and enforced by the international bodies, i.e., it would depend on the "etic conservation" as suggested by Byrne (2004: 19). If we say no to this issue, we will be able to overcome the two presuppositions and take the first step towards re-conceptualizing the notion of ICH as a living entity that can and, inevitably, will undergo transformations, without it being depreciated.

Heritage will hardly be able to serve the notion of identity and continuity of communities if it addresses only dying cultural practices and expressions that have lost their meaning and are maintained solely through artificial measures and bureaucratic interventions (Nas, 2002; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 2004). To render the notion of ICH more operational means challenging its dominant narrative by re-conceptualizing it into something that is under constant negotiation, to achieve a dynamic nature and not the simple celebration of survival of the past, and it will therefore be more able to embody an "emic conservation" model supported by the respective community of practicioners. This position implies accepting that the relations between the past and the present have to be reconsidered.

If the measures to preserve any type of cultural manifestation focus on documentation and archive in such a way that those who practice it are limited to repeating gestures and words without any chance of changing or re-appropriating their practices and meanings, the heritage element at stake cannot be understood as a living entity. To achieve this, the normative measures that aim for the preservation can not force immobility or hinder the establishment of new "creative connections with the past" (Lowenthal, 1985: 364). This is the only way to effectively achieve participation and access of the respective communities of practicioners. This can only be strengthened through the establishment and continuous reinforcement of interrelations between the traditional and the contemporary. As it is useless to try to save all traces of the past, and because the participation of the community in transmitting heritage is intrinsically contrary to the idea of preservation in its stricter sense, one of the strategies will be to aim all efforts towards re-working cultural heritage in a creative way. This new attitude will support the notion of ICH as a living thing - and not as the last relics saved - and will therefore be less interested in

historical collections that are threatened to disappear than in phenomena of transformation and re-appropriation of tradition. This new approach of ICH will take into consideration the renewed and reinvented practices by the contemporary generations, with its cultural and heritage mani-festations as hybrid and changeable realities that are the result of the continuous intersection be-tween the traditional and the contemporary. As such, heritage (both intangible and tangible) will be devised as embodying negotiation and transiency since it is through these that it will be re-appropriated and stimulated over time. In this regard, I find it relevant to recall the words of ar-chaeologist Cornelius Holtorf (2006) when he refers to the past and the negotiation of the past as being a "renewable resource". C. Holtorf (2006: 106) upholds the idea that preservation and destruction are not necessarily different categories seeing that both processes transform in a cru-cial way the heritage element on which they act, and goes on to state that a "certain degree of heritage destruction and loss is not only unavoidable, but can indeed be desirable", and so it can enable the creation and genuine claims over specific heritage. It will therefore be essential for change and instability to become part of the notion of heritage, and to be understood as inherent to its policies of animation.

Definitely understood as a living entity that is renewed, reinterpreted and reinvented by con-temporary generations, and not as remnants or traces of cultural realities threatened with extinc-tion, ICH has increased chances of becoming a means to empower communities over their own existence. For this purpose, the discourse on the preservation of heritage can not suppress con-temporaneity to the advantage of tradition as a key dimension of representation and claim of lo-cal identities. In other words, it is imperative that heritage become wholly part of people's lives and, at the same time, adjustable to their lives. According to this idea of heritage, as encompass-ing fluid knowledge and practices, and in constant negotiation, it will be devised as an updatable performance, therefore serving towards the construction of coeval identities and playing an ef-fective role in promoting the development of communities.

Against the backdrop of this other design of ICH, in which instead of the fear of loss there is a fundamental reason for the defence of heritage based on the contemporary social dynamics, I should take a look at the museum institution and its activities in such a way as to consider it be-yond the dominant preservationist ethos, highlighting the potential contribution it can bring to the flourishing and renovation of contemporary cultural realities.

The Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Museum

As one of the main institutions responsible for the implementation of heritage policies, so too does its dominant discourse on preservation and authenticity in the Museum need to be chal-lenged and worked on, through the idea of transformation and renovation. Despite the develop-ment begun in the 80s by the New Museology movement, generally speaking it will still be relevant today to call the attention to the need to renovate the Museum leading to the assessment of the "intangible". Let it be quite clear that having said this, I am in no way defending a polari-zation or even a clear distinction between tangible and intangible heritage, but rather defend the position stressed by Laura Smith (2006:44-64) that the entire heritage is, first and foremost, a "cultural practice" that, as such, forms "sets of values and meanings", being its handling and processing – at all times and for every case – the exploration of these "intangible" aspects. Yet, the effects of the traditional museum approaches can be particularly devastating for ICH, em-bodying its "fossilization", when they explore it like they do sometimes with the objects, frag-menting them from their original sources, i.e., people and the political, cultural and economic contexts involved in their actions. Only by changing its policies and traditional methods, in par-ticular the perception of heritage as something based on materiality, can the Museum have an effective role in the sustained development of communities.

Despite what can be called a late acknowledgement of the intangible dimension of heritage, and that it has contributed decisively to the prevalence of preserving artefacts in detriment to the dynamic awareness of cultural environments, at the beginning of the 21st century the interna-tional movement to protect heritage afforded the Museum express responsibilities in the safe-guarding of ICH. The turning point of this movement involving the museum institution began in 2002, at the Asian-Pacific Regional Meeting of the ICOM (International Council of Museums), the result of which were a series of guidelines that appeal to "efforts for the conservation, pres-entation and interpretation of ICH and the development of instruments and document standards

to establish holistic museum practices" (ICOM, 2002). In October 2004, following the ideal of the 2003 *Convention*, the 21st General Meeting of the ICOM adopted the *Seoul Convention*, which stresses the importance of intangible heritage and whose main message is that the Museum should change its focus from the tangible heritage – objects, artefacts and fixed tangible culture – to stories, ideas and cultural practices that form the true nature of the ICH (Baghli, 2004). Participants indicate the difficulties that such guidance may bring, with the recommendation that Museum professionals have to become more aware of how important the intangible heritage is through training programmes, and appeal to a change of mentality so that the intangible aspects of the entire heritage are taken into consideration, as well as its expressions not physically manifested.[5]

The series of documents and reflections hence produced clearly emphasize that the predominant practices within the Museum so far, especially those related to the collection, preservation and exhibition of the intangible representations of heritage, are in great part the opposite of what should be desirable for the promotion of ICH. The sceptical member of the jury of the first Proclamation of Masterpieces of Humanity, Richard Kurin (2004: 8) openly stated that the practices in force at the traditional museums are inadequate for the safeguarding of ICH, but immediately added that "the problem is that there is no other better institution to carry it out". In fact, the situation apparently is as follows: there is an increasing awareness that intangible heritage has a living nature and is constantly changing, but this finding can not be an obstacle for the Museum, although so far it has focused mainly on the more stable manifestations of heritage. Even if this means a tentative process, lacking a reasonable number of good practices, the road we need to tread involves the need to institutionalize some changes in the Museum's activities and practices. This is what is needed for the museum institution to no longer be a Mausoleum, as argued by Theodor Adorno [1967] (1981): a repository of discarded tangible culture, in which the lack of organic connections between those who visit it and the objects therein is very clear. Instead, we should strive for a "live museum", one that does not have as objective the strict preservation of tradition, but is able to establish renewable links between the past and the present, through the discovery of contemporary influences that act on the interpretations of heritage of the community in which it is found.

If one is to appeal to the new notion of ICH mentioned above, some possible innovations exist that can be mentioned to help the Museum to redirect the aim of its activities. The first mandatory change will be the notion that every museum approaches must take into account the relentless links established by people in relation to their heritage, and of heritage with the social, cultural, economic, political and surrounding world. The conventional museum practices normally remove heritage representations from their communities and territories, and place them within a building. Such practice need not be eliminated, rather coordinated so that there can be an understanding of intangible heritage in the sense of having a profoundly symbiotic relationship with tangible heritage, and so from being a passive landscape filled with objects the exhibition will become something live, a place that expresses cultural values. However, in addition to eliminating the idea of "intangible" as a residual or secondary component, and of the corresponding awareness that none of the two heritage components can be neglected – some may even defend that this should be included in the Museum's Mission Statement –, we can not disregard the fact that the cultural expressions, because they are alive, change according to the use people make of them in the various contexts in which they interact. As such, the Museum needs to expand its focus points by including – in a diversified and renewable way – the territories and communities who own such heritage. In particular within municipal museums, or local museums, populations and territories have to be wholly part of the Museum's Mission Statements. Since "culture" and "heritage" do not exist as such, only through human intervention, shifting a Museum focused on objects to a new Museum centered on people has to mean the inclusion of knowledge on practices and significances of heritage supported by its communities of practicioners, based on creation and constant renovation. A live Museum must be capable of looking beyond its tangible collections and also to equate them not only in terms of the past, but in terms of becoming involved in the contemporary realities and changing identities of the respective communities. This live Museum will be capable of helping people to discover who they really are and to develop feelings of belonging and communion, leading people to confront themselves not only with the historical essence of their cultural identities but, in a renewed way, to connect themselves with the more contemporary aspects of their cultural identities.

In an attempt to comply with the self-imposition of providing the means to carry out the said inclusion of territory and the community, but nevertheless without exhausting the possibilities, I hereby present a few suggestions. Generally speaking, it seems possible to me that the renovation of tangible culture in the present and correlating representations of change of local identities can be provided by the Museum. The aim to cater for the dynamics of cultural environments, and not only for the conservation of its old tangible products, is sufficient grounds for the Museum to be thought of as a performative space of exhibition that can reveal the scope of local creativity, in particular the contemporary creativity. Therefore, within its space, the presentation of works by local characters can also be materialized (or, in any case, intersected with the place), such as writers, plastic artists, craftsmen, sportsmen or business men, and collaboration protocols established with them, as well as the exhibition of performing arts, not necessarily traditional, or other cultural events on contemporary social themes. The organization of such events will represent a pro-active way of valuing the surrounding cultural environment and of contributing to a coherent identity construction process, in terms of territory and time. At the same time, it stands to reason that the collection and study of the respective regional ICH will also be possible, catering for the production and use of stories, memories and witnesses, to provide us with documents on the cultural values of the respective community to the present moment. With regard to such a task, as well as to any other local sponsored initiatives for the promotion of artistic creation, it must be referred that these activities should in no way be restricted to the "old" or "original", neglecting or labelling as irrelevant the new or hybrid form that may appear in the meantime.

A further possibility, of course, is to use the Museum collections themselves and through them reach the same argument on the community in contemporaneity. Should the intangible dimension of collections be effectively valued and addressed, a shift from more aesthetic approaches to more experimental approaches to objects could in fact be materialized, and therefore it would be able to refer to the social life of artefacts until the present moment and to the collective memory and its community. That could then deconstruct, for example, issues related to the materials they are made of, their origin and relative values, the resources used and their social, economic or other type of implications, the stories, memories and feelings that can be associated to them, by both their original producers and their current users. This strategy could be an effective way of making visitors aware of the parcelled and optative nature of museum exhibitions, and of the dynamic and renewable nature of social realities. If the various tangible attributes of a heritage find in the intangible component associated to it a way of being valued, since the consideration of the human interaction and of thoughts on heritage allows us to focus on its values and meanings, the value is very likely to be increased when the holistic approach of the past and the present can bring the issues under discussion to the current life of populations.

In the end, all those efforts of contemporary contextualization inevitably lead to a social-cultural animation and to the diffusion of heritage, which in turn will undergo a much more emic promotion, in the sense that the institutional or academic discourse is replaced by another discourse, closer or more re-appropriated by the local community. In countries like Portugal, where there are no major cultural splits or recent political disruptions, the idea of shifting power to the community through community curators in museums meets with many more obstacles than in countries with long recognized cultural minorities, or with political reconciliation processes in progress, for example in Canada and South Africa. Even if there are reasons not to use the mechanism of bicultural or pluricultural curatorships, the Museum has to understand the importance of including the updated self-representations of the community that accommodates it. By using this procedure, and through the corresponding use of a more emic conservation model, it is possible to show the transformations and local vitalities, according to what the Museum intends to contribute towards the development of feelings of continuity and cultural identity of the community.

A second change to be institutionalized has to do with the perception that all museum approaches must avoid cultural or identity essentialisms. In this regard, the main idea that must be reviewed, or even eliminated, is the idea of "authenticity", as this notion reifies the objectivity of a place. It has to be understood that whatever we can call "regional intangible heritage" refers not to the ICH of a place but to the present and acting ICH within a given place, in a specific period of time. Once again, this means providing enough space for change and instability so they can integrate the notion of heritage, avoiding a frozen conception of cultural expressions that

will send them to their death. However, nowadays, in addition to that implicit recognition of heritage renovation and diversity, such a distinction is also fundamental for the Museum to be able to include in its activities heritage forms of migrant communities, which in the meantime have become significant among the resident communities. The new cultural forms and practices, and the resulting syncretism that arises due to the ever growing shifts of world population, can not and should not be disregarded. And the only answer to the question that still continues to be asked, and yet is not relevant, on "to whom does a specific heritage belong", depends on who appropriates such heritage, claiming a cultural identity through it, and it is not legitimate to accept any other criterion for defining the title of "proprietor" of a heritage. At the same time, it is also important to be aware that despite the migratory flows changing the geographical patterns of ICH, and even causing its total dissociation with regard to the original territory, the dissociation of its territorial roots does not imply either the depreciation or the death of heritage. As a cultural entity whose perpetuity depends on its appropriation by people, the adaptations suffered by heritage according to the new contexts of time and place in which it is used can not be understood as a symptom of agony, rather of vitality.

Closely related to this ability shown by intangible heritage to change and adapt quickly without being adulterated, I dare suggest yet another change within the scope of these observations produced, aiming for an increasing participation of the Museum in the animation of local development. Cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), living and acting within a community, can be a unique competitive advantage due to a series of unique practices and values that differentiate it from the other communities. In these circumstances, and rightly so for extremely disadvantaged regions at other levels, bearing in mind the notion of ICH described before, the reasons for such fears or doubts as to the possibility of cultural tourism becoming an essential means of local development, and of the Museum becoming its most important promoter are incomprehensible. Should the ICH include specific spatial elements, its use as a tourist resource through the museum institution can be linked to an EcoMuseum; but even if it remains in its traditional Museum form, the exploration of heritage "intangibility" in tourist terms can well become an added-value that should be made lucrative to the advantage of the sustained development of the community. The creation of an entirely new invented cultural event, yet as such accepted and interiorized by the community as bearing some signs of its cultural heritage, can in fact be a real incentive for the defence of local heritage. On the other hand, such an experience that could be likewise successful as a source of sustainable development, can also foster the inverse movement of cultural tourism of becoming a way of promoting new supports and lead to new creative ideas. Bearing in mind that the "cultural" aspect is an ever increasing field in the tourism business, in terms of both supply and demand, to the extent that one can practically say that tourism would not be possible today were it not for culture, the significant potential of ICH as a tourist resource is undeniable. The intangible heritage of a community is something inherent, but at the same time changeable and renewable that keeps on transforming over the years according to the relevant changes in society. Its safeguarding, more than being protected by laws, needs to be lived and enjoyed. With this in mind, therefore, perhaps it is not too eccentric to admit that its use for tourist purposes can be a positive way of defending it. As I have mentioned before, the greatest fear of "cultural impoverishment" or the "loss of authenticity" is based on essentialist assumptions which, as such, do not merit much credit, except in the habitual preservationist ethos perspective. If we choose not to take that path, it will perhaps be more useful to repeat over and over again, until it is not forgotten, the idea that in the context of heritage and culture, "authenticity" is a purely imaginary quality.

CONCLUSION

The international movement for the protection of cultural heritage sponsored by UNESCO, despite the successive amendments in the regulations, continues to convey an official discourse focused on safeguarding, in which the preservationist ethos is undoubtedly dominant. Upholding the need to overcome this tendency, I suggest a re-conceptualization of the notion of ICH, which reformulates the interaction between the traditional and the contemporary. Ultimately, the question is to decide on whether the ICH has to be a distant and dead past, or dying past, or whether it can be anything from the past but updated in the present. As a living entity, it will

have to intersect not only with renovation and instability, but also with some resistance to conservation. In trying to act against the fear of cultural loss and destruction, one needs to make others understand that the acts of change have a vaster potential of renovation than of destruction. Instead of fearing the loss, the main purpose for defending heritage should be contemporary social dynamics. The contemporary way will undoubtedly be one of the key ways through which heritage can be used to the advantage of the sustained development of communities.

ENDNOTES

1 - The terms etic/emic were created by the linguist and anthropologist Kenneth Lee Pike (1912-2000), from the difference between *phonetics* and *phonemics*, to name, respectively, the objective study of the sounds of a language carried out by scientists and the knowledge and objective meanings of the sounds of the language as held by its native speakers. Moving beyond the original linguistic sense, this pair of words is currently used by several disciplinary fields, and serves to refer to the opposition between more exterior or out of context approaches that seek to define independent categories of local specificities and approaches according to a more internal standpoint of phenomena that include the meanings and interpretations given by participants.
2 - It is obvious that according to the notion of culture normally adopted by Anthropology, the human intervention is implicit in all cultural manifestations, and it makes no sense to talk about two separate categories or to establish a dichotomy between "tangible" and "intangible" cultural manifestations.
3 - In 1973, Bolivia handed in a proposal to add a protocol to the 1972 *Convention,* on the protection of Folklore.
4 - The application of Tango submitted by Argentina to the Masterpiece list was also rejected for the same reasons (not threatened with extinction).
5 - In that same year (2004), *Museum International*, an UNESCO periodical publication dedicated two editions to the theme of ICH. In 2000, edition number 32 of the *Study Series*, of the ICOM, had already focused on Museology and Intangible Heritage.

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