

Intangible Heritage as a Festival; or, Folklorization Revisited

Looking at examples of cultural practices listed by UNESCO as intangible heritage, this article appropriates the term “folklorization” from authenticity discourses and argues that the current heritagization of social practices is an aspect of the infusion of folkloristic/ethnological knowledge, perspectives, and concepts into the public sphere as part of modernity’s reflexivity. Aptly named “folklorization,” this infusion marks the success of the field in what has always been its ultimate objective: to change the way people look at their own culture, the way they define it, and the way they practice it.

Keywords

AFS ETHNOGRAPHIC THESAURUS: Heritage, theory, interpretation, conservation, authenticity

The scientist asks: Why does it work?

The engineer asks: How does it work?

The economist asks: How much should it cost?

The folklorist asks: Do you want fries with that?

ARE FESTIVALS INTANGIBLE HERITAGE? You could ask the Japanese government; in 2016, UNESCO added no less than 33 Japanese float festivals (“held by communities annually to pray to the gods for peace and protection from natural disasters” [“Yama, Hoko, Yatai” 2016]) to its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in a single new inscription. I have no argument with that, but I would add nuance: calling a festival “intangible heritage” is not to describe it, but to intervene in it. It is to impose upon the festival a particular relationship and to bring to bear on it a certain brand of expertise and set of tools. These are known as “safeguarding,” and they transform their objects.¹

One of the central tools in UNESCO’s toolkit for safeguarding cultural practices and expressions is precisely the festival. The festival is a hallmark of the intangible heritage regime, which fosters the development of festivals for everything from healing rituals

to foodways. I propose therefore to reverse the terms: instead of considering festivals as intangible heritage, consider intangible heritage as a festival. In this article, I tease out the meaning and logical consequences of that proposition and examine it in the light of three interlinked processes that folklorists study and in which we take part: festivalization, heritagization, and folklorization.

Working with examples of practices nominated to UNESCO's Representative List, I will make a case for reclaiming the term "folklorization" from authenticity discourses. I argue that the current heritagization of social practices is the latest phase in the long-term infusion of folkloristic perspectives, knowledge, and concepts into the public sphere as part of society's reflexive modernization. Aptly named "folklorization," this infusion marks the success of the field of folklore (broadly conceived) in what has always been its ultimate objectives: to change the ways in which people look at their own culture and how they define and practice it, and to reform the everyday life and expressive culture we study.

Safeguarding as Reflexive Modernization

Intangible heritage and safeguarding go together like tea and biscuits or, more accurately, like subject and predicate. Once a cultural practice is interpreted as heritage, that sets the stage for its safeguarding. To safeguard intangible heritage means to create new social institutions (like intangible heritage councils, committees, commissions, networks, foundations, etc.) and to curate certain expressive genres (festivals, but also lists, workshops, competitions, prizes, documentaries, promotional materials, etc.). The social institutions administer these expressions in practices referred to as "safeguarding."

One productive way to understand safeguarding is to consider it as the cultural inflection of what sociologist Ulrich Beck calls the "risk society" and defines as "a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernisation itself" (1992:21). It is in this sense that Beck, Anthony Giddens, and Scott Lash speak of an era of reflexive modernization, as modern technologies proliferate for dealing with the consequences of modernity itself (1994). If a surge in heritage is a consequence of modernity (consider how buildings turn into heritage once they are threatened by redevelopment, or practices turn into intangible heritage once social changes render them vulnerable), then safeguarding is a modern technology for dealing with those consequences, a systematic way of "dealing with hazards and insecurities" introduced by modernization itself in the cultural domain.

When deemed successful, safeguarding (1) *reforms the relationship of subjects with their own practices* (through sentiments such as "pride"), (2) *reforms the practices* (orienting them toward display through various conventional heritage genres), and ultimately (3) *reforms the relationship of the practicing subjects with themselves* (through social institutions of heritage that formalize informal relations and centralize dispersed responsibilities).

Beginning with the last point, the heritagization of traditional practices brings into being new social institutions and concentrates in them responsibilities that were previously distributed among a number of social actors. Thus, in 2007, for example,

a national center, Kuttiyattam Kendra, was founded in Kerala's capital to administer a national "action plan" for safeguarding the Sanskrit theatrical tradition after its inscription on UNESCO's list (Lowthorp 2013, 2015). In China, the Hongtong Center for the Safeguarding of ICH was charged with safeguarding the Hongtong Zouquin Xisu ("the custom of visiting sacred relatives in Hongtong"), and this new center took over many competences previously dispersed among local populations (You 2015). And in Malawi, following the inscription of the Vimbuza healing dance on UNESCO's list, the Ministry of Culture "convened an official body, the National Intangible Cultural Heritage Committee that comprises cultural workers, academics, and ethnic association members among others"; moreover, a special "Vimbuza Healers and Dancers Association of Malawi" was formed, which forthwith established a code of conduct for its members with the proclaimed purpose of countering "the negative image of Vimbuza caused by inappropriate practice" (Gilman 2015:206).

I have pulled these three examples from the comparative volume *UNESCO on the Ground: Local Perspectives on Intangible Cultural Heritage*, edited by Michael Dylan Foster and Lisa Gilman (2015), but they could be multiplied by random selection from the Representative List. In Madagascar, a coordination committee was formed to oversee the safeguarding of the wood-crafting knowledge of the Zafimaniry, and in parallel, an association of Zafimaniry artisans was created, the Fikambananan'ny Zafimaniry Mpiangaly Hazo, to safeguard, promote, and transmit their craft ("Periodic Reporting: Madagascar" 2012). And, in Vietnam, according to the government's report on safeguarding activities submitted to UNESCO, cultural authorities have invested in the management capacity of pre-existing Ca trù clubs to safeguard traditional Ca trù poetry singing, and, as a result, "the number of Ca trù clubs that hold regular practices and other activities and have a growing number of members has increased from 20 to 60" ("Periodic Reporting: Vietnam" 2013). In all these cases (and countless others), we are witness to an institutionalization of social relations, a centralization of responsibilities, and the bringing into being of new social actors: centers, councils, associations, clubs, committees, commissions, juries, and networks.

This reformation of the subjects of intangible heritage goes hand in hand with a reformation of the objects of intangible heritage: the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills to which the 2003 convention refers in its definition. Translation into the language of intangible heritage is subject to generic conventions associated with what we might call the intangible heritage genres. These genres promote the traditional practices, and in the process, they orient them toward display. Thus, besides forming an association and setting a code of conduct, the safeguarding plan for the Vimbuza healing dance in Malawi includes a new book about Vimbuza, a museum exhibit about Vimbuza, an inventory of Vimbuza practitioners, and, last but not least, the regular organization of Vimbuza dance festivals.

Vimbuza: Heritagization as Modernization

A bit more context: Vimbuza is a popular healing ritual among the Tumbuka in the north of Malawi. Showcased on UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Heritage, it is part of a larger dance-and-drum-based healing tradition (*ng'oma*) found

throughout Bantu-speaking Africa. Vimbuza was an odd candidate for the Representative List; for one thing, it is the only disease that figures on the list—"Vimbuza" names an illness as well as the cure. By means of traditional rituals, Vimbuza healers diagnose and treat spirit-related illnesses that result from spirit possession. The healing dance is one of its principal therapeutic rites. Accompanied by drumming and bells, the dance has an active audience made up mostly of women, who take part in the therapy. They sympathize and display solidarity with the possessed dancer by singing and clapping with increasing intensity, while the dance becomes more and more frenzied until it reaches its peak and the spirits release their grip on the patient (Gilman 2015:201–2).

UNESCO describes Vimbuza in the following words on its intangible heritage webpage and in its pamphlets:

Most patients are women who suffer from various forms of mental illness. They are treated for some weeks or months by renowned healers who run a *temphiri*, a village house where patients are accommodated. After being diagnosed, patients undergo a healing ritual. For this purpose, women and children of the village form a circle around the patient, who slowly enters into a trance, and sing songs to call helping spirits. The only men taking part are those who beat spirit-specific drum rhythms and, in some cases, a male healer. Singing and drumming combine to create a powerful experience, providing a space for patients to "dance their disease." Its continually expanding repertoire of songs and complex drumming, and the virtuosity of the dancing are all part of the rich cultural heritage of the Tumbuka people. The Vimbuza healing ritual goes back to the mid-nineteenth century, when it developed as a means of overcoming traumatic experiences of oppression, and it further developed as a healing dance under British occupation, although it was forbidden by Christian missionaries. . . . Vimbuza is still practised in rural areas where the Tumbuku live, but it continues to face oppression by Christian churches and modern medicine. ("Vimbuza Healing Dance" 2008)

Based on long-term fieldwork in Malawi, folklorist Lisa Gilman has analyzed the inscription of Vimbuza. She found, among other things, that the principal motive for its nomination seems to have been expediency. Compiling a nomination dossier is an arduous task, but Vimbuza was already well documented in several ethnographic studies. That made life easier for functionaries in the Malawi Ministry of Culture charged with getting something onto UNESCO's Representative List, preferably right away. As Gilman found out, however, local practitioners of Vimbuza by and large do not regard it as heritage at all. To them, it is a medical practice. Several healers interviewed by Gilman remarked that if the government wanted to take an interest in Vimbuza, it should be through the Ministry of Health, not the Ministry of Culture.

However, as UNESCO's description acknowledges, the medical establishment in Malawi is critical of Vimbuza as a healing practice. And in a predominantly Christian country with a strong Pentecostal element, the religious establishment is also antagonistic toward Vimbuza. Some call it satanic (Gilman 2015; Soko 2014). Mindful of this, it is rather remarkable that some of those whom Gilman found to be most supportive of Vimbuza's recognition as intangible heritage are in fact fundamentalist

Christians and medical doctors. They are pleased to see it recognized and showcased as Malawian heritage—as a dance and as an expression of cultural identity—if that means it is divorced from the ritual setting. As such, Vimbuza figures as heritage, not as *habitus* (Gilman 2015).

To invoke Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's theorization of cultural heritage, to recycle "sites, buildings, objects, technologies, or ways of life" as heritage is to give these things a new lease on life, not as what they once were, but as "representations of themselves" (1998:151). As a metacultural practice, cultural heritage points beyond itself to a culture it claims to represent. In the case of Vimbuza, it is evident that this metacultural relationship (to Malawi culture *through* Vimbuza) comes at the expense of pre-existing relations to the practice, which are medical or spiritual. It stands to reason, therefore, that those Malawians who would prefer to eradicate Vimbuza seem more favorably disposed to its standing as intangible heritage than many of its practitioners are.

In Malawi, then, a popular medical practice has become the object of safeguarding, for which it has no need. As one part of the action plan for safeguarding Vimbuza, Malawi now organizes an annual festival for a disease and its treatment, where the dance is divorced from its ritual ends and transformed into pure metacultural display—where it stands as its own representation (Gilman 2015). It is not hard to see why the healers with whom Gilman spoke feel that the concept of heritage misrepresents their healing practices. Translating the ritual into intangible heritage functions as a counter-ritual, draining it of its powers and substance, leaving the dance as display, the ritual experts on the festival stage going through the motions, acting as-if, for an audience that is not looking to be healed but just looking. In fact, safeguarding has emerged as the single greatest threat to Vimbuza's continued vitality. Only when treated as heritage did Vimbuza become endangered; its heritagization seems to pre-figure and perhaps to hasten its obsolescence.

Folklorization

UNESCO divides intangible heritage into five separate domains, one of which is "Social practices, rituals and festive events." A third of the elements inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity belong to this domain, including a dozen carnivals and a generous assortment of other festivals, feasts, fiestas, festivities, and celebrations.

Many of these are popular, enjoying broad participation and economic success. Ironically, their success presented something of a challenge in the early phase of UNESCO's intangible heritage programs, when candidature files for what was then called the Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity actually included a section in which imminent threats to proposed heritage elements had to be detailed and safeguarding measures proposed to counter those threats. Administrators writing the files sometimes had to be creative to imagine looming dangers and suggest appropriate interventions to thwart them; indeed, they often still do such creative somersaults even though this is no longer strictly required.

In some cases, other festivals pose the purported threat and are presented as illegitimate copies of the proposed original—another example of the dangers of success. Such was the case, for example, in the town of Berga in Catalonia where, according to Dorothy Noyes, “many locals have long insisted that the fire festivals in other Catalan towns are ‘copies’ of their festival, the Patum” (2006:36), a discourse of authenticity and plagiarism reinforced by UNESCO’s recognition and realized, among other things, through such intellectual property strategies as trademarking the name, symbol, and image of the Patum festival and its “most distinctive elements” (36).

In other cases, the files conjure up an impending threat to the authenticity of the festivals because of their popularity. What is deemed dangerous to intangible heritage in these cases is a surfeit of interest from outsiders, however conceived. UNESCO’s shorthand for this is “folklorization,” a notion predicated on a conception of authenticity that associates practices and expressions with communities, identity, and belonging. UNESCO’s second Proclamation of Masterpieces in 2003 gave recognition to at least three different traditional festivities (subsequently incorporated onto the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage) that had in this way fallen, or were in danger of falling, victims to their own success. The official Proclamation brochure warned, for example, that even though the Día de los Muertos in Mexico “faces no major threat nowadays, its significance for practitioners could easily be lost.” Hence, the candidature file promises intervention to safeguard this wildly popular festival:

The festivity’s metaphysical and aesthetic dimensions will be protected from the growing number of non-indigenous commercial and recreational activities that tend to obscure its spiritual character. It is for this reason that the action plan recommends improved legal protection for this tradition. (UNESCO 2004:29; author’s translation)

In much the same way, the Proclamation depicted the Carnival of Binche in Belgium as endangered by an excess of interest:

Binche’s carnival enjoys immense popularity today. Nevertheless, the pressures exerted by industrialization and increased media coverage over the years have resulted in the loss of certain traditional aspects of the carnival. In addition, the image of the Gille has been somewhat distorted by the media and other commercial interests eager to exploit the carnival’s striking emblem. (UNESCO 2004:11)

This sense of aggrieved ownership led the town council in Binche to seek intellectual property protection for the festival and its distinctive features in order to suppress copies and prevent distortion, mutilation, and modification (Tauschek 2010).

Finally, the Carnival of Barranquilla in Colombia came into its own because of Barranquilla’s position as a busy trading center. As the Proclamation text put it, the city’s commercial character

made its inhabitants very open to new trends and ideas, and the fact that it had no cultural traditions to really call its own, led to the easy adoption of those brought in by immigrants, turning it into a veritable melting-pot of indigenous, African, and European cultural heritages. (UNESCO 2004:17)

In spite of this understanding of the carnival as a festival on commercial crossroads, UNESCO presents excessive commercialization as a major hazard threatening the traditionality of the carnival:

With its growing success in the twentieth century, Barranquilla's carnival took on the trappings of a professional event, receiving wide media coverage. This development generates economic benefits for many low-income families, but the growing commercialization may at the same time constitute a potential threat to many traditional expressions. ("Carnival of Barranquilla" 2017)

As part of Barranquilla's candidature, the Colombian government put in place an action plan to protect "this time-honoured celebration," including legislation to protect the "popular and traditional aspects of the carnival that have been adversely affected by commercialization" (UNESCO 2004:17).

UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 2003 is modeled on the earlier Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972. Likewise, the Representative List of the former is modeled on the World Heritage List of the latter (Hafstein 2009). But whereas UNESCO (i.e., its member states and secretariat) has been eager to reproduce the success of the 1972 convention and list, it has also made an effort to avoid reproducing some of its failures, even if that effort is not always successful. Thus, questions of authenticity have plagued the World Heritage Convention from the outset. In the evaluation of monuments, buildings, and sites nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List, the convention's so-called "test of authenticity" has largely been based on the "authenticity of materials," judging the value of heritage by the presence of original materials and the absence of new ones. Formulated in the 1960s by a European conservation profession, this test reflects an ideal of permanence that is set in stone and developed in civilizations with stone monuments and historical stone buildings. Small surprise then that the World Heritage Convention's notion of authenticity has proved less than accommodating to alternative ways of conceiving of the relationship of the past to the present, including those that construct this relationship in perishable, organic materials or embody and perform it in practices, expressions, and know-how (Bortolotto 2010; Brumann 2014; Gfeller 2017; Labadi 2013).

One of the political motivations for creating a second heritage convention in UNESCO was to counterbalance the Eurocentric, monumentalist, and materialist bias of the World Heritage Convention with an alternative conception of cultural heritage, valorizing other ways of relating past to present. For this reason, the Intangible Heritage Convention eschews any direct reference to authenticity (Bortolotto 2013). However, it is easier said than done to get away from authenticity, which Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs aptly qualify as "one of the key tropes of modernity" (2003:16). If truth be told, our field of knowledge has had more than a little to do with its persistence, as Regina Bendix shows in her comparative examination of German and American folklore studies, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (1997). From the Ossian controversy to the condemnation of fakelore

and the criticism of folklorism, folklorists have actively participated in the politics of authenticity from the founding moments of the field through the present day (cf. Dundes 1989:40–56). Authenticity's ghost haunts the convention's implementation and returns in the specter of folklorization. We've seen it haunting festivals in Spain, Mexico, Belgium, and Colombia, but in the last analysis, the ghost is in the machine, so to speak; it lurks in the intangible heritage regime itself.

As conceived of in the discourse surrounding the convention, then, folklorization threatens intangible heritage with objectification and, once objectified, with commodification, exoticizing heritage for consumption by outsiders and alienating it from the practicing community, or at least transforming the community's relation to its practices. This threat is a factor of the shifting spheres of circulation of the practices and expressions in question; the circulation affects the circulating culture itself, changing the modes of its representation to respond to the tastes and expectations of a shifting audience.

The gist of this notion of folklorization is that the increasing circulation of such practices and expressions is self-defeating. It suggests that their representation on the interface between the community's inside and outside undermines and threatens to end their circulation within the community—at least as the *same* practices and expressions. Recall, for example, that “wide media coverage” and “growing commercialization may . . . constitute a threat to the many traditional expressions” in the Carnival of Barranquilla; that the popularity and proliferation of activities related to the Día de los Muertos mean that “its significance for practitioners could easily be lost”; and that over the years, increased media coverage has “resulted in the loss of certain traditional aspects of the carnival” of Binche (UNESCO 2004:17, 29, 11). It is worth noting here that the report submitted to UNESCO by Belgium in 2012 on the implementation of the convention acknowledges that “since inscription, the profile of the Carnival of Binche has been higher, with a larger number of visitors (including from overseas) and more media coverage” (“Periodic Reporting: Belgium” 2012). To say this might have been anticipated would be an understatement, but it would also miss the point: this was always the idea.

From this perspective, objectification of the practices and expressions makes them transferable and is the first step toward their alienation from the source community. Consequently, the first line of defense against the threat of folklorization is to curtail the circulation of the practices and expressions involved. The paradox here is that the principal incentive for inscription on national and international heritage lists is precisely to promote these festivals (and other practices singled out for listing), to attract more tourists, and to increase rather than limit their circulation; many of the tools used to safeguard intangible heritage are geared to these ends, including, notably, the festival.

Condensation

Promotion and awareness-raising carry various implications for the practices recognized as intangible heritage. One observes, for example, their condensation, which helps to make them transportable outside community boundaries, whether literally

through travelling performances, virtually through their mediatization, or socially through the inclusion of tourists as spectators. In Galichnik in Macedonia, for example, a traditional village wedding ceremony that used to be up to 8 days long is now enacted as a staged re-creation in a 2-day condensed version over a weekend, with thousands of people in attendance, an event that is “heavily promoted by the Ministry of Tourism” and extensively covered by the media under the banner of “intangible heritage” (Silverman 2015:241).

As Swedish folklorist Owe Ronström has noted, condensation is an integral part of the process of festivalization and may be understood as an economic and cultural rationalization and an “efficient means to process the local for global export” (2016:75–9). Thus, based on her decade-long engagement with the people of Cheju Island in South Korea, folklorist Kyoim Yun reports that once the Yongdung Rite (a Korean shamanic ritual) had been inscribed on UNESCO’s Representative List in 2009, shamans from Cheju Island were mobilized to stage the ritual in an intangible heritage festival for a cosmopolitan audience in Seoul. A media blurb for the event highlighted “the advantage of observing the island’s ritual without actually having to go there.” On another occasion, a shaman complained that the organizers “kept requesting that the ritual be shortened to fit the time frame for the whole event,” and in the end, they were “pushed to perform for twenty minutes total, a situation that the shaman compared to abbreviating Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet* to four words, ‘Oh Romeo!’ ‘Oh Juliet!’” (Yun 2015:190).

Something similar happens with Vimbuza. In the traditional ritual context, as Gilman notes, the dance may last anywhere from 2 hours to over 12 hours, all depending on the number of spirits involved and how long it takes for each spirit to pass through (2015). But in the festival frame, since no one is actually possessed and no one is healed, the Vimbuza dance is easily condensed and performed within a standardized time frame.

Another example: Place Jemaa el-Fna was among the first items inscribed on UNESCO’s list of intangible heritage. One of the busiest squares in Africa, the marketplace inside the medina in the old city in Marrakech juxtaposes food and fruit stalls, herbal medicine, merchandise, services, and performances—everything from snake charmers to Gnawa musicians to *castellers* building human towers. Condensed so as to make it transportable, the cultural space of Jemaa el-Fna has moved around from the square itself within the old Marrakech medina to various cities in Europe. The current phase in the heritagization of this old marketplace began in 1997, when UNESCO organized a symposium in Marrakech that paved the way for the Proclamation of Masterpieces of Intangible Heritage and later for the Intangible Heritage Convention (Schmitt 2008; Hafstein 2014; Tebbaa and Skounti 2011). Two years later, in 1999, with the Proclamation program underway at UNESCO and Jemaa el-Fna as its poster child, “Place Jemaa el-Fna” was re-created in the Tuileries Gardens, and several performers were given visas to create a cross between a festival and an outdoor museum in Paris, performing exoticism in a display genre that speaks more of intangible heritage than it does of the marketplace itself. For linguistic reasons, much of the audience in the Tuileries Gardens related mostly visually to the performances; for tax reasons, the herbalists could not sell the goods they brought with them, but could only act as if

they were trying to sell them to an audience that itself was not looking to buy, but rather just looking (Kapchan 2014b).

In 2001, artists from Jemaa el-Fna were back in Paris, invited this time by UNESCO's Director-General to stage the cultural space of Place Jemaa el-Fna at UNESCO's headquarters. It was part of a festive event orchestrated by UNESCO over three consecutive evenings in the Place de Fontenoy. The event showcased six cultural practices on the occasion of their proclamation as part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity. A festival celebrating universal heritage, the event transported to Paris condensed versions of Kutiyattam theater from India, Kunqu opera from China, Nogaku theater from Japan, Gelede ritual from Benin, and Mandingue music and epic poems from Guinea, in addition to the cultural space of the Jemaa el-Fna marketplace. All of this was staged for a public of diplomats and dignitaries invited to partake of the spectacular feast in the 7th arrondissement of Paris. Those of us who missed the production in Paris may find consolation in visiting instead the Jemaa el-Fna Food Festival in the Netherlands; known as the "Eetplein Djemaa el Fna," it takes place every September in Rotterdam's Museum Park (Eetplein Djemaa el Fna Rotterdam 2017).

Festivalization

A critical, comparative approach to the implementation of the ICH convention brings to light the dominance of certain expressive genres in the activities called safeguarding: lists, competitions, prizes, documentaries, and especially the festival, most important for our discussion here. It is not just that traditional festivals are heritagized, though that happens on a wide scale and, we may add, folklorists, ethnologists, and anthropologists take an active part in that process (Leal 2016). More important still for my argument here is that as one part of their safeguarding, the practices and expressions that have been reframed as intangible heritage are festivalized. Indeed, the festival as a genre of display is so closely associated with the safeguarding of intangible heritage that, in Malawi, an illness and a medical practice for its treatment have been festivalized. Gilman cites Malawian healer Lestina Makwakwa, who she says was, like many of her colleagues, "especially critical of the idea of a Vimbuza festival . . . or other occasions where Vimbuza is performed outside of the ritual context, because these displays strip it of its significance" (2015:208).

To a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail. From the Vimbuza disease and healing ritual in Malawi to shamanic rites in Cheju Province in South Korea to the cultural space of Jemaa el-Fna, safeguarding traditional practices as intangible heritage involves creating festivals dedicated to them—even when that makes no sense. As a rule of thumb, where we have intangible heritage, we will find festivals. Another way to put this is to say that intangible heritage is a festival. It is other things besides a festival, granted, but whatever else it may be, it is a festival.

Beyond Malawi, Korea, Macedonia, and Morocco, the examples could be multiplied, and, of course, one could always provide counter-examples, for there are certainly exceptions. Be that as it may, I think the pattern is clear and striking. I suggest, therefore, that the heritagization process of recent years may be understood in the context

of the festivalization process of the same period. It is an oft-commented fact that the number of festivals worldwide has grown exponentially (Laville 2014; Négrier 2015). Especially since the 1980s and 1990s, cultural festivals have moved beyond the arts to festivalize a miscellany of expressions, practices, and identities, from pastries to pétanque, from costumes to crafts, from fishing to rituals, and from ethnicity to locality, moving out from the institutionalized arts to the domain nowadays increasingly known as intangible heritage (Laville 2014; Négrier 2015; cf. Ronström 2016).

At the same time that new festivals emerge, existing festivals are marketed to tourists; indeed, festivals have always attracted the attention of travelers. As Roger D. Abrahams remarked, festivals are occasions for the festive community to show off: “resounding times and elaborated places for excited exchange, for bringing out, passing around, for giving and receiving the most vital emblems of culture in an unashamed display of produce, of the plenitude the community may boast, precisely so that the community may boast” (1982:161). Festivals are “geared toward deliberate display” (Picard and Robinson 2006:2), offering a “boastful” reflection of the community to locals and visitors alike. As David Picard and Mike Robinson observe, festivals “draw our attention as participants, tourists and scholars precisely because they provide moments of time and space to reflect upon our being in the world and questions of collective meaning and belonging” (2006:26).

In this light, the surge in festivals in general and the festivalization of intangible heritage in particular may be understood in the context of our era of reflexive modernization (Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994) as modern technology for dealing with the consequences of modernity: economic (providing financial incentive in the festival context for arts, crafts, and activities that have lost their former economic basis), social (forging a sense of community in times when its dissolution is commonly decried), and political (staking claims on the allegiance of participants and showing off to neighboring cities/towns/villages). Like heritage itself, festivals are tasked with turning place into meaningful location and defining its uniqueness as a destination (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998) for inhabitants and visitors alike. Thus, festivals nowadays help to stage modern societies’ reflexive awareness of themselves while reforming the relationship of people to their own culture and to themselves as a social collective. While far from identical, the contemporary processes of heritagization and festivalization can therefore work in tandem, each assisting in and accelerating the other.

Safe for Consumption

The festivalization of popular culture has a longer history, however, one in which our discipline has been actively involved for a long time. Michel de Certeau has outlined a compelling history of this engagement in France, dwelling in particular on two critical moments in the development of the field of study variously known as folklore studies, ethnology, or *les arts et traditions populaires* (popular arts and traditions): the end of the eighteenth century and the last decades of the nineteenth century (1986:119–36). Noting that the “liberal, enlightened aristocracy of the end of the eighteenth century developed a passion for the ‘popular’” (121), de Certeau relates the early formation of the discipline to a “rusticophilia” that fomented the development of village festivals

in which a virgin (“rosière”) was crowned for her chastity. “The vogue for ‘rosière’ celebrations, which began in the 1770s, represents a return toward the people, whose words had been silenced, to domesticate them more completely,” de Certeau writes, adding that the “idealization of the ‘popular’ is made all the easier if it takes the form of a monologue. The people may not speak, but they can sing” (122; cf. Abrahams 1993).

In 1789, the French people spoke, giving voice to the threat that was always the undercurrent in the aristocratic idealization of the popular. A centerpiece in the cultural program of the revolutionary government was to study vernacular languages and dialects across France with the express purpose of stamping them out; they were thought to give cover to the enduring remains of the feudal order in the provinces. But folk or popular, vernacular culture came once again into focus during the days of the Third Republic (1870–1940) in France with the organization of festivals, a proliferation of collections and editions of folklore and folk song, and the formation of a science dedicated to its study. The same held true across much of Europe and the Americas in this period. This was the heyday of folklore; from the concert hall to the university, composers, artists, and scholars from the new middle classes adapted cultural expressions from the “folk,” transferring them between social classes, from the rural proletariat to their cultured bourgeois or petit bourgeois readers and audience.

In the economic boom and large-scale social projects that followed the Second World War in Western societies, the previous class structure changed profoundly. The unprecedented growth of the middle class cast folklore in a new light, with new audiences enjoying it in new mediums. Thus, according to Pierre Bourdieu’s analysis of taste in his magnum opus *Distinction* (which he based on French mass surveys from the 1960s) folk dance is “one of the spectacles most characteristic of middle-brow culture” (1984:52). The “spectacle of the ‘people’ making a spectacle of itself, as in folk dancing,” Bourdieu hypothesizes, “is an opportunity to experience the relationship of distant proximity, in the form of the idealized vision purveyed by aesthetic realism and populist nostalgia, which is a basic element in the relationship of the petite bourgeoisie to the working or peasant classes and their traditions” (58).

This nostalgic idealization of popular culture reinforced the identities of the audiences as modern, progressive, and cultured. Both its study and its spectacularization perform the stories that modern societies tell themselves about themselves. Their effect is not innocent. “It is precisely the ‘popular’ halo . . . that formed the foundation for an elitist conception of culture,” argues de Certeau (1986:122), through a contrastive exoticism. This contrast stands at the origins of the field of folklore/ethnology, separating the scholar, his readers, and the spectators of popular arts, on the one hand, from their practitioners, on the other—a condescending symbolic violence that displays and festivalizes expressions and customs in “a castrating cult of the people” (123).

The folklorist, concludes de Certeau, arrives “at the moment a culture has lost its means of self defense” (123). As part of the dominant regime, the discipline’s task has been to incorporate subaltern expression into dominant culture, so it may stand there as its own translation, its own representation, under generic conventions of display that render it enchanting, exciting, innocuous, and/or exotic but unthreatening and safe for consumption. Depoliticizing the distinction between the popular and its

counterpart (which, after all, is a political distinction), scientific writings, collections, spectacles, and festivals alike may serve as pliers for pulling sharp teeth and fixing an innocent smile on the face of the popular.

Taking a leaf from de Certeau's book, I would urge that the proliferation of festivals and the proliferation of "heritage" since the 1980s are not entirely distinct trends with distinct explanations. On the contrary, they are interlinked expressions of the same social, economic, and cultural conditions, two overlapping results of the same forces at work (cf. Ronström 2016:72). We could invoke in this context all the usual shorthand expressions that we throw around to describe macro-trends and forces in contemporary societies: from globalization to neoliberalization, or from the post-industrial society of services, tourism, and spectacle to governmentality, responsibilization, and identity politics. I don't think we would be wrong to invoke any of these, though admittedly we would not be very specific. But as a folklorist, I would suggest that we look again in another direction: our own.

Folklorization Revisited

The jeans that I'm wearing have a large stamp inside, on the back side of the left front pocket. It elucidates the history and cultural significance of the blue jeans: "For over 140 years, our celebrated high quality denim riveted jeans have been before the public. This is a pair of them! Created by Levi Strauss in 1877—has become an American tradition, symbolizing the vitality of the West to people all over the world." In other words, wearing this pair of jeans means something, and the company making them would like me to know that I have stepped into American tradition, clothed with rich symbolism. Lest I forget it, my place in Western cultural history is wrapped against my thigh.

This is but one example, well known; for others, just look around. You read about it on labels and menus, or you learn about it from advertisements and in-room literature: from Levi's to Marlboros and from slow food to hotel chains, consumer goods are now presented with analytical notes on their origins and cultural meanings. "Less and less remains uninterpreted in our society, while more things seem to gain meaning only through interpretation," writes Austrian folklorist Konrad Köstlin. "Our behavior and the objects with which we surround ourselves come complete with self-justifying, explanatory, and interpretive histories of reference" (1997:261).

As Köstlin teaches us, the particular charge, perspective, and language of ethnology or folklore studies have been popularized to the extent that the disciplines themselves are nearly irrelevant; we are all folklorists nowadays. In contemporary societies, an ethnological understanding of everyday life is integral to everyday life itself, diffused by media, marketing departments, and oral tradition.

"If it were not so pompous-sounding, we could call it a popularized 'cultural scientification' (*Verkulturwissenschaftlichung*) of the world," Köstlin muses (1997:261). I have a better idea. Let's call it "folklorization." After all, the cultural science to which Köstlin refers is the one known in the United States as folklore (and in many other countries as ethnology). Appropriating the concept of "folklorization," so frequently

invoked by UNESCO to describe purported threats to intangible heritage, I would suggest that we expand it to refer to this reflexive capacity of modernity that turns the folk into folklorists.

Bear with me.

UNESCO did not conjure the concept of folklorization out of thin air, of course. We may trace its lineage through analyses and critiques from the last decades of the twentieth century of state-sponsored folklore festivals, troupes, and ensembles in Latin America and Eastern Europe, and of the hegemonic adaptations and commercial reworkings of cultural traditions (cf. Bendix 1997; Feldman 2006; Habinc 2012; Hagedorn 2001; Kaneff 2004; Klekot 2010; McDowell 2010; Turino 2003). According to John McDowell's reading of such critiques, "'to folklorize' means to move traditional expressive culture from an original point of production and relocate it in a distanced setting of consumption" (2010:182), and folklorization constitutes "a processing of local traditions for external consumption" (183). Polish ethnologist Ewa Klekot notes that folklorization, in this sense, is a tool used extensively in modern states to deal with potentially dangerous differences: "Folklorize and rule seems to have been a tacit motto of both the British empire and the Soviet Union, with its folkloristic parades celebrating 'the unity of over 100 nations'" (2010:80n5). Indeed, as ethnologist Mateja Habinc writes in the post-socialist context of Slovenia, "folklorization is not a specific characteristic of socialist times; it is part of the more general project of modernization" (2012:193).

The genealogy of the concept of folklorization extends back to an essay from 1962 in which German folklorist Hans Moser coined the term "Folklorismus," or folklorism, to describe "secondhand mediation of folk culture" (1962; author's translation) or secondhand folklore, that is, to refer to shifting spheres of circulation of performances, customs, and expressions. The companion concept to "Folklorismus" in Moser's writing is that of "Rücklauf" (feedback or backflow), coined to describe the recycling of scholarly interpretations of popular expressive and material culture into the expressions and materials themselves; thus, the interpretation advanced by folklorists of a particular festival or costume tradition becomes part of the festival or tradition itself; the fieldworker who comes along a generation later to study the festival or the costume may recognize in her interviews and observations the theories of her predecessors, whether they elucidate its origins, function, structure, or symbolism. For Moser, this presented a conundrum: an ersatz layer of culture, requiring the vigilance of folklorists who had to separate the wheat from the chaff, folk culture from folklorismus (1964).

Already in 1966, Hermann Bausinger, the leader of a new generation in the field in Germany, called such distinctions into question. In a brilliant essay, Bausinger observes that first- and secondhand traditions are intertwined, implying that their analytical separation is a distortion of social facts. The criticism of folklorism, Bausinger argues, is, in effect, directed at the democratization of attitudes that were previously exclusive (1986). Such attitudes are characterized by Bourdieu as arising out of social distinction; their democratization reflects a shift away from an aristocratic sensibility (the "passion for the popular," of which de Certeau spoke, among the liberal aristocracy of the end of the eighteenth century) to the "populist nostalgia" found in particular among craftsmen, small shopkeepers, clerical workers, and junior executives, according to Bourdieu's analysis of the French mass surveys of the 1960s (1984:58–60). In

other words, the concepts of folklore and folklorismus both arise out of social and cultural processes for which the usual shorthand is modernity; they arise from shifts in social structure and the cultural performance of these shifts in books, spectacles, and festivals (Bendix 1997).

In fact, Bausinger suggests that, at closer look, the supposedly distinguishing characteristics of folklorism are actually part and parcel of any representation of traditional culture: “the do-just-as-if, the conjuring up of new expressions for ancient forms, the stamp of tradition even among regressive forms, the artificial patina, and the presumption of wholeness and originality” (1986:121). These, Bausinger points out, and in particular the “presumption of wholeness and originality,” also characterize the criticism of folklorism, which thus appears to rest on the same premise as that which it criticizes. He concludes that “folklorism and the criticism of folklorism are in the long run identical” (122).

Both are an integral part of reflexive modernity, highlighting its progress and innovation through contrast while also channeling the critique of a litany of modern ills, like the disintegration of the community, the dissolution of the family, or, indeed, the leveling force of globalization. As Köstlin remarks, “modernity’s main characteristic is . . . the synchronic presence of that which is historically asynchronous” (1999:290). Folklorization, then, is a process integral to modern societies (cf. Anttonen 2005). In other words, the scholarly field dedicated to popular expressive and everyday culture developed as part of the reflexive mechanism of modern societies:

As a discipline concerned with the domain of the unquestioned and taken-for-granted, Volkskunde has always wanted to inform its own people in their own language about their own habits. . . . As the study of one’s own culture, Volkskunde always wished for “Rücklauf,” the replanting of that which it described. That which had been collected was to be returned to the folk, the recorded folk song was to be sung again and recognized as a “typical” folk product. (Köstlin 1999:292)

The names of the field may provide a clue in this context. Both the English term “folklore” and the German term *Volkskunde* were coined so as to designate at once the discipline and its object: the lore (i.e., learning/science) or *Kunde* of the folk/*das Volk* as well as the lore (learning/science) or *Kunde* about the folk/*das Volk*. In the English-speaking context, this has been a continuing source of apprehension for folklorists, especially as the term’s semantic range in popular usage has gradually narrowed down to the frivolous and erroneous while the field that it names has expanded and diversified its scope.² However, if Köstlin is right, then the ultimate objective of the study of folklore has always been a full merger of the lore of the folk and the lore or learning about the folk; after all, the point of modern society’s reflexivity is to absorb its knowledge of itself into social practices.

A New Wave of Folklorization

For the past couple of centuries, writes Köstlin, “the business of this discipline has been to label ‘special’ what people have regarded as normal, to declare the everyday as something particular” (1999:293), worthy of attention, in need of interpretation, and

asking to be displayed, whether in books, journals, catalogs, exhibitions, spectacles, or festivals: from plows, dresses, and lullabies to cigarettes, blue jeans, and jokes. Our attention changes its objects. Our theories become part of everyday life itself, for as Köstlin notes, “the rites of passage of Arnold van Gennep or the liminal theories of Victor Turner already are being read as contentious movie scripts for the practice of modern living,” heralding “a joyful retribalization of society” (293). Actually, this is the particular charge of the field as part of society’s reflexive capacity, its purpose:

The discipline will continue to do so. It will bespeak the normal, the routinized, the customary—thus changing its character completely. It will offer to decipher that which thus far has simply “been there.” There will be less and less that will not be spoken of. (Köstlin 199:293)

In an article on the ethnologization of Provence, French folklorist and anthropologist Laurent Sébastien Fournier describes the process I refer to as folklorization as

a slow sedimentation of folkloristic knowledge that winds up influencing both how local populations look at their own culture and how they define it to those people (temporary and permanent residents) who discover it. (Fournier 2016; author’s translation)

According to Fournier, “the 1970s marked the beginning of a new wave of ethnologization,” or folklorization, in which ethnologists, folklorists, anthropologists, and their students “take more and more part in administering local cultural projects, which in turn breathes new energy and meaning into the field” (2016; author’s translation).

Fournier’s insight extends far beyond the French territory of Provence, of course. In the United States, as Robert Baron and Nick Spitzer artfully demonstrate, “a national infrastructure of public folklore and folklife programs crystallized” during the 1970s and 1980s and “quickly grew into a well-articulated network of federal, state, and local programs” (2010:vii; see also Baron 2016). The work of public folklorists involves “the staging of folklife festivals, curating of exhibits, production of documentary videos and films, and coordination of folklife in education programs” (Hansen 1999:35) in addition to radio production, Web curation, and the coordination of prize, fellowship, and apprenticeship programs for vernacular artists. As Baron and Spitzer define it, public folklore “is the representation and application of folk traditions in new contours and contexts within and beyond the communities in which they originated, often through the collaborative efforts of tradition bearers and folklorists or other cultural specialists” (2010:1). David Whisnant describes the work of public folklorists as one of “systematic cultural intervention” (1983:13) designed to bring about cultural change (cf. Whisnant 1988; Hansen 1999).

But this folklorization of the public sphere extends well beyond the work of people trained in folklore, ethnology, or anthropology. We are witness in the past decades to an incredible success: the success of our field of knowledge (broadly defined) in shaping contemporary society’s reflexive understanding of itself. It is, however, an uneven success; the perspectives, the craft, and the vocabularies of folklorists and ethnologists suffuse society, but often without the critical edge. Reflexivity is rallied

to the causes of celebration and marketing more often than it serves to strengthen critical awareness and promote change (cf. Köstlin 1999; Mugnaini 2016).

The ubiquity of heritage is, I would suggest, one concomitant of this folklorization of public space and of everyday life. The heritage subject has a reflexive relation to the objects and practices she recognizes as her heritage. As part of our reflexive understanding of our material culture and social practices, we have learned to have a heritage. Having a heritage is to be different from that heritage: it is to be modern. To refer once more to the analysis of Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “the possession of heritage—as opposed to the way of life that heritage safeguards—is an instrument of modernization and mark of modernity” (2006:183).

The heritage relation creates a sense of distance by imagining a vista outside one’s own self from where one may observe one’s own customs and expressions with, as it were, an alien gaze. Michael Dylan Foster refers to this part of the heritage relation as defamiliarization; the most telling example is precisely the way that UNESCO’s recognition of heritage sites or practices tends to change local perspectives by prompting local populations and authorities to see “one’s own tradition through the eyes of another” and to take pride in it, an important part of what Foster terms the “UNESCO effect” (2011:66).

This change of perspective is further reinforced by the orientation of traditional practices toward the heritage genres of display. This staging of heritage and the distance that it introduces between the subject and itself enables the recognition of the collective subject of cultural heritage: the cultural “we.” It enables us to speak reflexively in the first-person plural: we Icelanders (in my case), we are Vikings, we wrestle, and we eat putrefied shark. Regardless of the fact that none of us are actually Vikings, very few of us wrestle, and many of us are disgusted by putrefied foods, collectively we nonetheless recognize traditional wrestling (known as *glíma*) and traditional foods (including shark) as “our” heritage. Having a heritage makes us modern.

For our purposes, the heritagization of recent years and decades may be considered an aspect of or a phase in the folklorization of the past two centuries. Safeguarding practices and expressions as cultural heritage routinely involves translating them into heritage genres of display, such as the list, the prize competition, and in particular the festival, which promotes condensation, transportability, and spectacularization, attracting tourists, cultivating a reflexive relationship between populations and their practices, and giving the latter a “second life . . . as representations of themselves” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:151). This is folklorization in more or less the sense that the term is used within UNESCO discourse (itself extensively informed by folklorists and the field of folklore). Ironically, when reference is made to folklorization in that discourse, it is presented as the problem while safeguarding is the solution; I submit instead that the two go hand in hand.

Moreover, heritagization is one aspect of folklorization in the second sense that I propose to give the term, that is, of the infusion of folkloristic knowledge, perspectives, and concepts into the public sphere, where they shape the public’s understanding of and relation to expressive culture and social practices, and indeed reform those expressions and practices as part of society’s reflexive modernization. In the context of intangible heritage, such reform is referred to as safeguarding. The festival, a genre

of display characteristic of intangible heritage, provides a stage for performing this reflexive modernity.

Postscript: Do You Want Fries with That?

Just in case it didn't register, the argument I've made throughout this article runs counter to the punch line in the opening joke. However, as emblems of modern culture, fries themselves are not immune to folklorization. In 2014, the National Union of Fryers in Belgium (Navefri/Unafri) ran an advertising campaign presenting potato fries as cultural heritage. It collected more than 50,000 signatures for its petition to add the culture of the "fritkot," the Belgian "fry hut," to the national inventories of intangible heritage ("Le 'fritkot' devient patrimoine" 2016). Ironically, many English speakers refer to these fries as French, but in a small federal state divided into linguistic communities and regions with strong separatist movements, the potato fry is unusual in its ecumenical capacity to denote pan-Belgian identity across linguistic and political differences. According to statistics from the National Union of Fryers, 95 percent of Belgians visit a fry hut at least once a year. Along with the Red Devils (a.k.a. the national soccer team) and the royal family, potato fries might be described as part of the mysterious trinity uniting Belgians into one nation.

Make that a quaternity: let's not forget Belgian beer. In 2016, "Beer Culture in Belgium" was inscribed onto UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity in a rare display of national cultural unity, following its listing in the three Belgian inventories of intangible heritage: "De biercultuur in België," Flemish community, 2011; "La culture de la bière en Belgique," French community, 2012; and "Die Bierkultur in Belgien," German-speaking community, 2013. Likewise, on the waves of the successful campaign and petition, the culture of the fritkot was inscribed on the Flemish inventory of intangible heritage in 2014. In accordance with the government's federal structure, cultural issues are devolved to the Flemish, French-speaking (Walloon), and German-speaking communities, and therefore each community maintains its own inventory. In 2016, potato fries found their way onto the inventories of intangible heritage in the other two communities as well—another important symbol of their unity-in-diversity.

In the nomination dossier, the National Union of Fryers argues that "the delicious scent of fries, the unique social atmosphere, and the know-how of our fryers make potato fries not only an irresistible delicacy, but also a unique cultural treasure." Indeed, the dossier explains, making fries is an artisanal trade, and the fries themselves are a testament to cultural diversity. The fry hut, we learn, is a social microcosm and a public assembly, gathering bus drivers, students, and bankers to partake of their favorite fries. The dossier goes on:

In contradistinction to the fries at McDonalds, which taste the same in Helsinki, Madrid, and Chicago, every Belgian fry has its own flavor. There are over 5,000 fryers in Belgium, but one of the key traits of the fry-hut culture is the way in which two fryers in the same village make fries with distinctive flavors, and each one of their respective customers prefers the fries of his or her own "fry-hut tribe." It is important

to continue to cherish this diversity and to cultivate the social experience surrounding the fry hut. Many households have a fry day, a particular day of the week when the family goes to the fry hut. Exiting the film theater, the football stadium, the concert hall, or after work, people go there together, socializing with a cone of fries. (*Semaine de la frite* 2016; author's translation)

I don't know whether folklorists, ethnologists, or anthropologists took part in making this dossier. I would not be surprised. But I enter the quotation above into evidence that the Belgian fryers have successfully adopted the mode of knowledge production distinctive of these disciplines. They speak my language. In other words, they have folklorized potato fries and the art of frying them. Not only that, but they've figured out how to fry folkloristic knowledge; they dip it in the frying pot at just the right temperature and serve it up hot and perfectly golden: crisp on the outside, soft on the inside.

It seems to me that this is a prime example of folklorization, illustrating how scholarly interpretations of material and expressive culture are recycled so as to become part of the object interpreted. Less and less remains uninterpreted in modern societies, as Köstlin claims, while more and more frequently, the commonplace comes furnished with cultural histories and ethnographic frames of reference. An ethnological understanding of everyday life has been integrated into the practice of everyday life. Not only is eating fries from your local fry hut a ritual pledge of allegiance to your "fry-hut tribe," but it cultivates a distinctive social experience with a long history, sustains family values, celebrates diversity, and upholds the community of Belgians. Through extensive media coverage and promotion, the folklorization of the fried potato comes to shape the public perception of the fry hut and, to some extent, people's relation to their foodways, and perhaps even the flavor. And since this process happens under the sign of intangible heritage, it comes complete with a toolkit for safeguarding the fry hut and the potato fry, including the usual expressive genres and the social institutions to curate them: modern technologies for dealing with the consequences of modernity.

Not only does Belgium have its National Union of Fryers (Navefri/Unafri), but two museums have opened dedicated to potato fries, in Brussels and in Brugge, with exhibitions on fry culture and history; a trilingual publication educates the public on fry culture and promotes its Belgianness; and the Week of the Fry ("Week van de Friet" or "La semaine de la frite") honors the "potato fry, Belgium's cultural and gastronomic heritage" in a media campaign and series of live events (*Semaine de la frite* 2016). Not only are there fry huts at every festival that takes place in Belgium, but to complete the recipe for intangible heritage, a dedicated "Fry-hut Festival" ("Festival de Fritkot") was organized in Brussels, complete with the popular selection and crowning of the city's best fry hut, a prize competition in the traditional template of the rosière street festivals of the eighteenth century.

Presenting the candidature of fry-hut culture for the national inventories of intangible heritage, the president of the National Union of Fryers, Bernard Lefèvre, explained to journalists that "the fry huts have long been so commonplace that no attention has been paid to them." Belgians had to see their traditions through the eyes of another

in order to declare the everyday as particular, requiring interpretation, valorization, and safeguarding. "It is only thanks to the interest of foreign visitors that we have learned to value them," said Lefèvre, before adding the inevitable conclusion: "Now we have to make certain that they continue to exist!" ("Les friteries font désormais partie" 2014; author's translation).

Notes

1. For background on UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 2003, its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and the Proclamation and the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity that preceded the 2003 Convention and the Representative List, please refer to the 2008 volume *Intangible Heritage* by Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa and its forthcoming revised and updated 2nd edition; to the empirical case studies collected in Michael Dylan Foster and Lisa Gilman's *UNESCO on the Ground: Local Perspectives on Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2015); to essays in Deborah Kapchan's collection *Cultural Heritage in Transit: Intangible Rights as Human Rights* (2014a) and in the critical anthology edited by Regina Bendix, Aditya Eggert, and Arnika Peselmann, *Heritage Regimes and the State* (2013); to Michelle Stefano and Peter Davis' *Routledge Companion to Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2016); and, finally, to a number of other excellent critical analyses by such folklorists, ethnologists, and anthropologists as Regina Bendix, Chiara Bortolotto, Ellen Hertz, Kristin Kuutma, Dorothy Noyes, Markus Tauschek, and Jean-Louis Tornatore. The current article also appears as a chapter in my forthcoming book, *Making Intangible Heritage: El Condor Pasa and Other Stories from UNESCO*, to be published in 2018 by Indiana University Press.

2. See, for example, contributions to the special issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* edited by Ilana Harlow and published in the summer of 1998, "Folklore: What's in a Name?"; cf. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1996) and Hafstein and Margry (2014).

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