

Dan Ben-Amos

BETWEEN INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND FOLKLORE

ABSTRACT

During the last half a century, the concepts of folklore and heritage went respectively through parallel but inverted courses. I think there are serious problems in the mating of “Folklore” with “Intangible Cultural Heritage” and the differences between them are unrelated to age or generation gaps but are inherent conceptual incongruities between the two ideas. Shortly after Dorson declared folklore as “one of the remarkable stories of the present academic scene” (1970), folklore’s wheel of fortune began to turn backward academically while its star rose on UNESCO horizons, emerging in tandem with the tangible and intangible heritage that has solidified as “Intangible Cultural Heritage” (ICH). Toward the end of the twentieth century, the term’s use took off, appearing in handbooks, anthologies, monographic essays, and numerous articles. “Intangible Cultural Heritage” seemed the right resolution for the folklore crisis, not only in the United States and Germany but in all the nations that UNESCO unites, and folklorists flocked to it like a moth to the flame. At first glance, the mutual attraction seemed perfect. What could have been more attractive to folklore, political freedom, and cultural liberation after many years of suppression, and yet had the full support of states and their political leaders? But the harmonious relations between Intangible Cultural Heritage and Folklore were short-lived because their inherent incompatibility could not sustain this union. The packaging of traditional culture for modern consumers deflates it from the symbolic values of these words and objects within their communities. When heritage begins, tradition ends. In this way, a society abdicates its collective social and cultural identity and turns itself into a staged show. There is no way but to conclude that with such a significant degree of separation, Intangible Cultural Heritage is not a mate for the discipline of folklore.

KEYWORDS: *folklore, cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage*

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INTRODUCTION¹

In 1972, my teacher, Professor Richard M. Dorson (1916–1981), published a new edited volume, *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*, which included essays by leading American folklore scholars. As an “Introduction” (1–50), Dorson recycled his article “Current Folklore Theories” (1963), which he had published nine years earlier. At that time, he identified five major dominant theories of folklore studies in the mid-twentieth century: “Comparative Folklore Theories” (Dorson 1963, 93–96), “National Folklore Theories” (96–101), “Anthropological Theory” (101–105), “Psychoanalytical Folklore Theory” (105–109), and “Structural Folklore Theory” (109–110). But nine years later he noticed a sixth theory percolating in American folklore studies and he added to his earlier essay a new brief chapter on a “contextual” theory (Dorson 1972, 45–47). He pointed out that “[w]hile as yet they do not form a cohesive school, they do share...a leaning toward the social sciences, particularly anthropology, linguistics, and the cultural aspects of psychology and sociology; a strong preoccupation with the environment in which the folklore text is embedded; and an emphasis on theory. They object strenuously to the text being extrapolated from its context in language, behavior, communication, expression, and performance, overlapping terms they continually employ. These ideas unite such young Turks among the folklorists as Roger Abrahams [1933–2017], Dan Ben-Amos, Alan Dundes [1934–2005], Robert Georges [1933–2022], and Kenneth Goldstein [1927–1995].”

I was motivated to select my topic by a phrase I read in a manuscript I anonymously reviewed for one of our journals. The eloquent and thoughtful scholar who pondered the question of the history of tradition concluded the manuscript with the provocative statement: “This insight may serve to prepare us for the next turn of the screw: The contemporary transformation of tradition into *cultural heritage* [my italics] adding new dimensions to the old story.”

This indeed is a very tempting idea. During the last half a century the two concepts of folklore and heritage went respectively through parallel but inverted courses, which, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, converged in the freshly minted concept of “Intangible Cultural Heritage” (ICH). Could this be a marriage made in heaven?

Marriages may be made in heaven, but they take place on earth, and we can legitimately wonder, “how on earth did the two of them get together? What made them attractive to each other to begin with, and how could they turn a few dates into a lifelong marriage?”

By taking a glance into their biography, or rather history, switching back from the metaphoric heaven and earth into the scholarly reality, it is legitimate to ask how does an over hundred and fifty-year-old concept, which some say is much older (Mazo 1996), get together with a fresh late 20th-century idea that emerged out of the political crucible of the United Nations? Odd as it may seem, a glance into the history of folklore, and the academic straight jacket in which it found itself at the end of the twentieth century, may offer some explanation for the attraction between this couple of terms and shed light on the pursuit of Intangible Cultural Heritage instead of folklore, by thoughtful folklorists (Foster and Gilman 2015).

In a reflective moment, it does not escape me that my response to the concept of “Intangible Cultural Heritage” might be a symptom of a generation gap. In 1977, Gershon Legman (1917–1999) a folklorist whom I admire, published anonymously (J. H. B. 1977)² a satirical essay ridiculing the new wave in folklore scholarship known colloquially as “The New Perspectives,” after the title of a volume that Paredes and Bauman edited (Paredes and Bauman 1972). “Am I now in his place, upset by a new turn in folklore studies that younger folklorists are introducing?” Certainly, this is not a dismissible idea. Science and scholarship progress is not by accumulation of theories, but rather by their dismissal, as Thomas Kuhn convincingly revolutionized the perception of progress in knowledge (Barnes 1982; Fuller 2000; Gutting, 1980; Kuhn 1962, 2000; Lakatos and Musgrave 1970). Yet, I think there are serious problems in the mating of “Folklore” with “Intangible Cultural Heritage” and the differences between them are unrelated to age or generation gaps but are inherent conceptual incongruities between the two ideas. A brief overview of their respective histories might expose them and forestall a doomed mating.

FOLKLORE IN THE MAKING

Customarily, within folklore scholarship, its history begins with the modern coinage of the term “folklore.” Recruiting the authority of

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), Richard Dorson celebrated William John Thoms, alias Ambrose Merton (1803–1885), as a genius for his coinage of this term and thereby delineating, observing, and naming a cultural category that existed but had been unrecognized in society (Dorson 1968, 89–90). In doing so Dorson reaffirmed established interpretation of the history of folklore (Bennett 1996; Boyer 1997; Dundes 1965, 4–6; Emrich 1946; Krappe 1930, xv; Roper 2008; Smith 1947), upon which subsequent folklorists, among them his students, continued to construct the history of the discipline (i.e. Bronner 2017, 3–6; Georges and Owen 1995, 35; M. E. B. 1996; Simms and Stephens 2005, 23).

Outside folklore scholarship, Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) observed that “the narrow concept of popular character and of folklore was born in the pre-Romantic period and was basically completed by von Herder and the Romantics” (1968, 4). His focus was on folk laughter, the language of the marketplace, and festive rituals, not upon the entire range of folklore. Yet, conceptually he could have extended his argument to all the genres of oral literature, contending that a cultural category must exist before it is named. While his insight was valid, he had downplayed the contribution of Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) and the Romantics to the idea of the “folk” and the conception of folklore itself. Herder did not simply complete the concept, but changed its value, and thereby re-conceptualized the folk and its lore, and the relation between country and court.

In the history of civilization, literacy and urbanity became wedges that split apart cultures and societies that shared languages, religions, and social structures. Literacy infused a sense of superiority into its possessors. Already in the early and late antiquity, poets and thoughtful people argued against such superciliousness of the learned and the urbane. Hesiod in the 8th century BCE wrote that “Gossip never dies, breathing in so many mouths. She is not unlike a god” (*Works and Days*, 763–764).³ In the 5th century BCE Aeschylus (456–425) wrote “The people murmur, and their voice is great in strength” (Agamemnon 938; Grene and Lattimore 1959, 1–63), and in the first century BCE in Rome, Seneca the Elder (55 BCE–39 CE) wrote “*crede mihi, sacra populi lingua est*” (...believe me, the people’s tongue is divine) (Seneca 1974, 3,839—*Controversiae* 1.1.10). The rarity of such pronouncements, and their argumentative rhetoric underscored

them as lone voices against a prevailing opinion that persisted in literate societies. The learned class in Europe did not abate their attitude toward the illiterate multitude for several centuries. In medieval texts the denigration of the people is evident by the ignoring of their language by the literate class. An explicit denouncement of the multitude is apparent in an exchange about a proverb that states the opposite. The first time the proverb *Vox Populi Vox Dei* (the voice of the people [is] the voice of God) appears in writing is in a letter written by Alcuin of York (735–804),⁴ a friend and an adviser of Charlemagne (742–814 CE) and a teacher at the Carolingian court, sent to Charlemagne (Boas 1969, 8–13). While the proverb, quoted as a phrase that people “are accustomed to say” endorsed their voice, Alcuin himself argued against its validity, stating that “[t]he people in accordance with divine law are to be led, not followed. And when witnesses are needed, men of position are to be preferred. Nor are those to be listened to who are accustomed to say, ‘The voice of the people is the voice of God.’ For the clamor of the crowd [vulgi] is very close to madness” (Boas 1969, 9; see also Boas 1973; Gallacher 1945).

About half a millennium would have to pass before writers and authors would open the gates of literacy to vernacular languages, but once they did, there was no way nor need to close them. With the invention of print in the fifteenth century, oral poetry and oral literature found a cheap entry ticket into the markets of letters, and the tales, ballads, and proverbs of the rural folk had their impact on the minds of the urban intellectuals (Fox 2000; Graff 1981; Mundal and Wellendorf 2008; Stewart 1991; Stock 1983; Watt 1991). Other historical trends intertwined with the discovery of the rural backyards of European cities. In the Renaissance authors and poets, such as Dante Alighieri (1265–1321), Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375), Geoffrey Chaucer (1343–1400), Angelo Ambrogini Poliziano (1454–1494), and William Shakespeare (1564–1616), to name just a few, discovered vernacular languages and literatures;⁵ explorers discovered the peoples without written histories (Ben-Amos 1984; Hodgen 1964; Wolf 1982) whom Montaigne (1533–1592) welcomed in his essay “Of Cannibals” (written 1578–1580; see Célestin 1996, 28–62; Montaigne 1965, 150–159), and collectors discovered antiquities and curiosities in Europe and elsewhere (Findlen 1996; Pomian 1987; Stagl 1995) as well as the medieval manuscripts of epics and sagas (China

and Young 2005; Goody 1987; Goody and Watts 1963; Green 1994). These new discoveries broke down the walls of literacy within which European urban intellectuals fortified themselves. They encountered their counterculture but instead of denigrating, they smothered it with love and admiration. The supercilious attitude toward the non-literary rural folk transformed into a reconfiguration of their low social status into the literal roots and the basis upon which a national society had built its structure. Neither German, Finnish, Russian, Irish nor English peasants considered themselves representing the “spirit,” or better, to use Herder’s metaphor, the soul, of their respective nations, in their language, metaphors, songs and tales, but the urban and literate societies of their respective countries did.

The lifting of the countryside population and the urban labor force out of the shadow of obscurity that literacy had cast over them did not occur at once; it was a cultural historical process for which the German term *Volkskunde* and Thoms’ English coinage of “folk-lore” were its linguistic buoys in culture and society. The festivals of everyday life (Bourne 1725; Brand 1777, 1813; Hone 1826) that Thoms counted as the direct predecessors of his linguistic innovation (Merton 1846), were not the only literary and cultural trends that converged in the idea of folklore. This is neither the time nor the place to engage in a detailed historical narrative of the ideational trends that coalesced in the concept of folklore, but it would suffice to point out the Renaissance “Pastoral Poetry” (Alpers 1982, 1996, 2004; Bernard 1996; Chaudhuri 1989, 177–180; Congleton 1944, 1952; Gifford 1999; Hulse et al. 1988), the Scottish philosophers that pondered, as philosophers do, the nature of human society (Grobman 1973, 1974a, 1974b, 1977), the Italian thinker Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) who ventured to propose the study of mankind as a science (Bayer and Verene 2009; Berlin 1976; Danesi 1993; Lilla 1993; Luft 2003; Mali 1992, 2003; Miller 1993; Schaeffer 1990; Tagliacozzo 1993; idem et al. 1969; idem et al. 1976; idem et al. 1978; idem et al. 1986; Verene 1991, 1994; Vico 1961, 1965, 1982) that paralleled the science of the physical world formulated by Isaac Newton (1642–1727), the discovery, or creation of, the poetry of Ossian (Bauman and Briggs 2003, 128–162; Bold 2001; McKean 2001; Nagy 2001; Porter 2001; Stafford 1988), and the lifting of balladry from oral performances and broadside publications (Day 1987; Fox 2000, 1–9, 248–250, and 382–

893; Hirsh 2011; Percy 1765; Shepard 1969; Watt 1991, 39–73; and see Baycroft and Hopkin 2012, 403–415).

FOLKLORE AS A SCIENCE

William Thoms himself coined the term “folklore” but he did not conceive of it as a science. For him it was a journalistic title for a magazine column which he tended for four years, after which it petered out because of the lack of contributors (Roper 2007, 211, note 1). The first to propose folklore as a subject for a systematic scientific inquiry was Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (1823–1897) who considered “Volkskunde als Wissenschaft” in a lecture he delivered at the University of Munich in 1858 (Moser 1978; Stein 2001, 492) and published a year later (Riehl 1859).⁶ Five years later Johann Georg von Hahn (1811–1869)⁷ reached the conclusion that “The study of folktales appears to have reached the stage in which a scientific view of its material, and the development of a precise terminology, have become essential preconditions of any continued progress” (1864, 40).

In England, folklorists considered their subject as appropriate to, and requiring of, scientific inquiry only in the last two decades of the 19th century. While Hartland published *The Science of Fairy Tales* in 1891, Gomme preceded him with an article “The Science of Folklore” that appeared in *The Folk-Lore Journal* in 1885, followed by others (Burne 1885; Burne et al. 1885; Glennie 1889; Temple 1886), and more than twenty years later published his famous *Folklore as an Historical Science* (1908), the significance of which was the subject of a President of the Folklore Society fifty years later (Burstein 1957).

In England, folklore scholarship developed primarily outside the academic institutions (Ashman et al. 1986, 1; Briggs 1978; Dorson 1961; Sanderson and Evans 1970; Widdowson 2010; Wingfield and Gosden 2012).⁸ Initially American scholars and folklorists followed the British model. The American Folklore Society was founded a decade after its British sister, in 1888. While its founder and the first editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*, William Wells Newell (1839–1907), was not on the faculty of any university (Abrahams 1988; Bell 1973), he recruited to the leadership of The American Folklore Society some of his generation’s top scholars and public intellectuals in the humanities and the social sciences (Camp 1989, 10). Among them were

the anthropologist Franz Boas (1858–1942), the ballad scholar Francis James Child (1825–1896) and a major American author like Mark Twain (1835–1910), whose literary work touched upon folklore (Bell 1955; Cuff 1952; Franz 1956; Strong 1967; Winkelman 1965; West 1930). These and other scholars pursued folklore research and taught folklore courses. Francis Child's leading student at Harvard University, George Lyman Kittredge (1860–1941), was lured from his studies of Shakespeare and the Middle Ages into folklore studies in America (Abrahams 2000; Bauman 2008; Birdsall 1973; Hyder 1962; Rudy 1999, 2004), so much so that European scholars would send him inquiries about folktales among the Native Americans (Thompson 1996, 57–58). Yet the American universities and colleges kept the discipline of folklore in the waiting room for slightly over sixty years.

The American Folklore Society, rather than the universities, was the authority over research in folklore scholarship. For example, in the thirties, when the government initiated a massive folklore collecting project in many states, under the New Deal program (Grieve 2009; Hirsch 2003; Mangione 1972; Penkower 1977), it was the American Folklore Society, to which government officials turned for approval (Ben-Amos 2014; Mangione 1972, 276; Weltfish 1938, 103), rather than the universities.

The turning point came about at the conclusion of the Second World War. In 1945, The American Council of Learned Societies accepted the American Folklore Society into its ranks (Anonymous 1945), and in 1950 the first doctoral program in folklore was established at Indiana University (Thompson 1996, 152). This major event was accompanied by an international conference “Folklore in Midcentury” (Thompson 1953) and consequently, even before the internet, the foundation of the folklore program at Indiana University reverberated around the globe. In 1957, Richard M. Dorson took the helm of the program and transformed it into a world-wide center for folklore scholarship with students flocking to Bloomington, Indiana literally from around the globe. Dorson and his faculty members conceived and developed an international community of folklore scholars. They organized conferences in Yugoslavia (Dorson 1966) and in England (Dorson 1970). The first “Conference on African Folklore” was held in Bloomington on the campus of Indiana University on July 16–18, 1970 (Dorson 1972), and in 1973 when the 9th World Congress

of Anthropology was held in Chicago, a pre-Congress conference on the topic “Folklore in the Modern World” took place in Bloomington on the campus of Indiana University on August 28–30, 1973 (Dorson 1978; Dundes 1977; Jason and Segal 1977). Twenty years after the founding of the folklore department, Dorson could declare with pride that “[t]he vigorous development of folklore as a discipline in American universities is one of the remarkable stories of the present academic scene” (Dorson 1970).

But then the wheel of fortune turned backwards. By the nineties of the previous century, folklorists in the United States held not one but two conferences in which they lamented the depressive state of folklore studies in American universities and colleges. First was *Western Folklore*, in which a symposium on “Taking Stock: Current Problems and Future Prospects in American Folklore Studies” appeared in 1991. In his concluding statement, Elliott Oring wrote: “Almost everyone seems to agree that something is *wrong* [original emphasis] with folklore and that the future of folklore studies in the United States depends upon something being fixed or otherwise improved” (Oring 1991, 75). Five years later, the *Journal of Folklore Research* dedicated a special issue to “Folklore in the Academy: The Relevance of Folklore to Language and Literature Departments” (1996), in which folklore’s prospects were no brighter. To top it all, in celebrating the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the coinage of “folk-lore,” Ilana Harlow convened a panel at the 1996 Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania on the subject “What’s in a Name”; several folklorists, including Jane Beck, the President of the American Folklore Society that year, proposed to do away with the name “folklore” because the “name no longer communicates what we do or who we are” (Beck 1997, 134; see also Ben-Amos 1998; Bendix 1998; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998; Motz 1998; Oring 1998; Schrempf 1998). John Dorfman took the suggestion literally and a year later published an article in which he declared the death of folklore as an academic discipline (1997). Crossing the millennium and entering the twenty-first century, the situation of folklore in the academy worsened. No wonder that Alan Dundes fell into an Ecclesiastic depression crying “[U]tter futility. utter futility! All is futile!” (Ecclesiastes 1:2), or in his own words: “[t]he state of folkloristics at the beginning of the twenty-first century is depressingly worrisome” (Dundes 2005,

385; Oring 2019, 137–138).⁹

FOLKLORE AND VOLKSKUNDE

While the folklore depression was not universal, it inflicted some key scholarly communities, each with its own symptoms. In the United States, the decline of folklore manifested itself particularly in the academic space with repercussions in scholarship, but in Germany, for example, it had deeper roots in politics and national ideology, reaching far back into the nascent stages of folklore, or rather *Volkskunde*. The semantic components of the term *Volkskunde*, which Åke Hultkrantz considered to be “the model for the English term *folklore* created by Thoms in 1846” (Hultkrantz 1960, 243) held a scholarly promise, yet forecasted the destruction of folklore as an academic discipline in Germany. *Volkskunde* appeared in print, innocently enough, as early as 1782 in the popular journal “Der Reisende” (The Traveler), in an article that was likely written by its editor Friedrich Ekkard (1744–1819) (Kutter 1978; Stagl 1998, 524; Tokofsky 1996, 207; Weber-Kellermann et al. 2003, 9–19). Initially the Czech scholar Josef Mader (1754–1815) adopted it as a term for statistical ethnography in the European countryside (Guilláin 2000, 39; Ward 1981, 2 and 344; Weber-Kellerman et al. 2003, 9). But the Philosophical-Romantic foundations of the concept were laid already in Herder’s anthologies of international folksongs (Herder 1778–1779) although he did not use the term *Volkskunde*. Herder couched national romanticism with humanism. Influenced by Vico (Berlin 1976) he dressed Renaissance and Baroque pastoralism with nationalism that manifested itself in the formation of the unique attributes of each nation.

In Herder’s term, all “folk literature” must be “literature of the people.” It must be *volksmässig*. Herder originated the term *Völkslitteratur* or *Volkspoesie* in its modern meaning. He alternated the terms frequently with *Litteratur* or *Poesie des Volks*, emphasizing now the originative, now the appropriative, relation. It is in this test of *Volksmässigkeit*, agreement with folk character, that difficulties enter, which, though they complicate some of the detailed applications of the term *Volk*, are yet readily analyzed and interpreted as consistent aspects and functions of collective personality.

The term *Volk*, “folk,” always has been subject to much vague-

ness and contradictoriness of usage. Most of this confusion can be removed by the observation that the difficulty is not so much one of definition as one of valuation. That is, *Volk* is to almost everyone a generalization of the less sophisticated part of an ethnic or political group who work for their living and are distinguished by the qualities of mind and character associated with a more or less simple, wholesome, laborious, responsible, sober, and unstrained mode of life. But as to the valuation of this collective type, two sharply antagonistic points of view have alternatively dominated throughout history. It was especially the age of Pope and Dryden, of Louis XIV and Boileau, and following Boileau's example that of Opitz and Gottsched in Germany, which regarded the folk and its creative, especially its literary, products with contempt and derision, as lacking in refinement, learning, mastery of diction, and subtleness and elevation of thought. This aristocratic attitude toward folk literature is characteristic of the Rationalistic movement.

The Romantic movement of the eighteenth century, on the other hand, especially since its culmination in Rousseau's doctrine of the natural man as the embodiment of perfect spontaneity proceeding directly from the hand of the Creator, tended to idealize the people as the highest embodiment of man, as the union of the true children of God. In the clash of these two valuations appeared most of the characteristics of the two movements, the Rationalistic and the Romantic. Herder was offended by the one-sidedness of the one as much as of the other. He was bitterly opposed to the aristocratic sterility of Rationalism, but he was no less intolerant of the subjective narrowness of Romanticism. He finished by combining what was best in both into his profound and rich synthesis, which formed the foundations of what for several generations was, and may again become, the motive of a new era of humanity (Schultz 1921, 117–118).

With the compounds of *Volkslitteratur* and *Volkspoesie*, Herder salvaged the folk and its literary creativity from its debased position in society, and endowed the peasantry attachment to the land with a spiritual and a national value. For Herder and other Romantics, the folk generated and guarded the spirit of a nation that was molded in the crucible of its landscape, history, language, and literature (Adler et al. 1997; Barnard 1965, 1969, 2003; Bohlman 1988, 6–7; Clark 1969, 251–281; Ergang 1966; Herder 2004; Koepke 1982; Mayo

1969; Mueller-Vollmer 1990; Noyes 2015; Simpson 1921; Waldow and De Souza 2017). His impact was twofold. He celebrated “cultural individuality as a reflection of the plentitude of God...combined... with a genuine cosmopolitan outlook in the *Humanitätsideal*, the common bond of humanity, but saw it expressed in the diversity rather than the similarity of human forms” (Bunzl 1996, 20). Secondly, and most important for folklore, he substituted laws, political institutions, and forms of governance as the entities manifesting the *volksgeist* of a society, or “the productive principle of a spiritual or psychic character operating in different national entities” (Rotenstreich 1973, 491) with their folksongs, folktales, and other creative literary and poetic forms of the peasantry, the non-literate, and the lower classes. Compatible with his thesis on the emotive origin of language (Moran 1967; Suphan 1877–1913; Sapir 1907) he shifted the national core from logic to cultural experience (Adler 1994; Almond 2008; Goebel 1912; Griffith 1971; Kamenetsky 1973; Lunn 1986; Reed 1965; Sapir 1907; Schütz 1920–1923; Simpson 1921; Stachle 1922; Wilson 1973; Wilson 2006).

But no sooner did his ideas begin to have their impact in German and European public intellectual and literary spaces were they coopted by the *Volkisch* ideology that Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl matched with *Volkskunde* and advocated as a science in the service of nationalism and ethnic and national exclusionary mythology and theory (Dow and Lixfeld 1986, 7–8; Gerndt 1988; Kahmann 2015; Loose 1940; Matthias 1903; Moser 1978; Schnurbein 2016, 180–215; Simonsfeld 1898; Stein 2001, 2010). Not Herderian folk-humanism, but Riehl’s *Volkisch* populism won the day in Germany of the Third Reich and served the ideology of National-Socialism. When the nationalism that the romantics espoused lost its humanism it turned into racism and revealed its ugly head that culminated in a Holocaust (Gerndt 1987, 1988; Mosse 1981, 19–24; Link 1990, 121–124, 133, and 135; Strobach 1987; Weber-Kelleman et al. 2003, 123–136).

During the second half of the 20th century, folklore studies in Germany were haunted by the ghost of the Third Reich and German folklore scholars did their utmost to free themselves from its claws, only to find out how strong its grasp was (Dow and Lixfeld 1986, 1991, 1994; Gerndt 1987; Hermand 1992; Jacobeit et al. 1994; Lixfeld 1991, 1994; Naithani 2014; Remy 2002). No wonder that those

of them who sought to reinstitute folklore studies in German universities on solid academic foundations could not rid themselves of the term *Volkskunde* fast enough (Bendix 1998, 240; Dow and Lixfeld 1986, 1991, 1994; Hermand 1992; Lixfeld 1991, 1994).

“A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME”

There is no comparison between the German and the American predicaments of folklore scholarship, but in both cases, in a moment of crisis, folklorists turned to magical solutions they encountered in their studies, looking for an identity change by changing their name (Motif N131.4. *Luck changing after change of name*). In the United States, leading folklore scholars bemoaned the disciplinary name, but offered no viable alternative. Regina Bendix, who was then a University of Pennsylvania faculty member, reported largely about the German experience yet, for America only, concluded humorously with the suggestion that “William Thoms in 1996 would surely have suggested that we seek an appropriate word to replace his good Saxon compound, and would have publicized his suggestion in today’s equivalent of the *Athenaeum*—the Internet” (Bendix 1998, 242). Jane Beck considered the discipline’s name its major impediment and because of its public and academic marginalization, urging folklorists to develop better political and public relation skills, but offered no new name to emboss on its flag (Beck 1997). And Barbara Kishenblatt-Gimblett suggested that “by fighting to keep the name, we’ll lose our life as a field of study” (1998, 252). They all realized that names are not free-floating air-filled balloons, nor are they just shingles that hang above an office or a store door. Rather they are meaningful paradigms of knowledge, culture, and ideas with histories, experiences, and with their respective symbolic identities (Ben-Amos 1998; Boersema 2002; Deely 1978; Korff 1996; Lotman and Uspensky 1978; Margolis 1968; Oring 1998; Stocking 1971).

In Germany Hermann Bausinger, determined to re-establish folklore studies on solid sociological-anthropological foundations, renamed folklore studies at the University of Tübingen to be *Empirische Kulturwissenschaft*. In the last two decades of the 20th century, 21 institutes and departments in German universities adopted new names, cleansing themselves from any remnants of Fascist and Nazi

ideology (Bendix 1998, 240; Korff 1996). These names veered folklore toward the social sciences, particularly ethnography and sociology, and although they did not reverse it to the statistical ethnography of Josef Mader in the 18th century, they syphoned off the *geist* out of the *volksgeist*.

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Outside Germany “Heritage” emerged as the keyword that the American folklorists were clamoring for to save their discipline and to restore dignity to their field. Philologically the term has Latin, Old French, and Old English roots; semantically it connotes both hereditary of property and tradition, an essential folkloristic concept. What name and concept could have been better? Raymond Williams (1921–1988) had not yet included it in his list of keywords in public discourse in which “culture,” “society,” or the folklore relevant, “myth” appeared (Williams 1976, 76–82, 243–247, and 176–178), but shortly after the 1972 UNESCO *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, “Heritage” began to gain force in public discourse. Toward the conclusion of the twentieth century the use of the term took off and it appeared in handbooks, essays in anthologies, monographic essays, and numerous articles. “Intangible Cultural Heritage,” seemed the right resolution for the folklore crisis, not only in the United States and Germany, but in all the nations that UNESCO unites, and folklorists flocked to it like moth to flame.

At first glance, the mutual attraction seemed perfect. What could have been more attractive to folklore good will to all, weak and powerful nations alike, colonial empires and decolonized nation-states, that experienced not only political freedom but cultural liberation after many years of suppressions, and yet had the full support of states and their political leaders? Had politicians, and the cultural experts that they recruited as their advisers, been able to foster “the next turn of the screw: The contemporary transformation of tradition into *cultural heritage* [my italics] adding new dimensions to the old story?” Or, more precisely, can the concept of “Intangible Cultural Heritage” serve as the new paradigm for folklore as an academic discipline? England, the country in which the term “folklore” was coined, and in

which respected thinkers contemplated its scientific potential (Dorson 1968; Gomme 1885, 1908; Hartland 1891), yet resisted its incorporation into its venerable academic establishment, finally issued a resounding positive answer to this rhetorical question. In its announcement of the opening of an M. A. program in Folklore Studies, the University of Hertfordshire prominently refers to the UNESCO “Intangible Cultural Heritage.”

This Masters in Folklore Studies, which will run for the first time in 2019–20, is the only such a program offered in England. It offers students with an Honors degree in a range of related subjects, such as History, English Literature, Anthropology, Archaeology, and Sociology, a thorough grounding in the history of the discipline of Folklore and current work in the field. This distinctive program combines breadth with depth of study through wide-ranging but inter-connected modules with a focus on legend, ritual, belief, and tradition in British society. Students will also explore Folklore in comparative international contexts and consider its global importance as an aspect of UNESCO’s definition of Intangible Cultural Heritage.¹⁰

My own university appeared to make the shift from folklore to “cultural heritage” in the United States even earlier. After terminating, at the turn of the millennium, a distinguished Department of Folklore and Folklife that was founded in 1962 and educated more than 100 folklore scholars (Hufford 2020; Miller 2004; Samuelson 1983), the University of Pennsylvania founded in 2008 the Cultural Heritage Center, offering a “Cultural Heritage Management Certificate” upon the completion of a four-course program. Will other universities follow? While academic administrations are slow to act, the shift from “folklore” to “Intangible Cultural Heritage” has begun in three domains: politics, popular culture, and in the intersection between research and commerce.

FOLKLORE AND HERITAGE IN UNESCO HALLS

Ironically, shortly after Dorson declared folklore as “one of the remarkable stories of the present academic scene” (1970), its wheel of fortune began to turn backward academically while its star rose on UNESCO horizons, emerging in tandem with tangible and intangi-

ble heritage that has solidified as “Intangible Cultural Heritage.” The history of this synchrony has been explored in several studies (Hafstein 2004, 2007, 2014, 2018; Smith 2004, 2006; Smith and Akagawa 2009). The concept was hued and honed in international diplomatic conferences during the last quarter of the 20th century, building upon earlier conferences, agreements and conventions (Rodwell 2012; Sherkin 2001).

A leading international scholar such as the Finnish folklorist Lauri Honko (1932–2002) welcomed with open arms the “Text of the Recommendation for the Safeguarding of Folklore” (Honko 1990a, 1990b) and as editor of the *Nordic Institute of Folklore Newsletter* published it as a lead article accompanied by photographs (Honko 1989). This proclamation had a long incubation period (Sherkin 2001) and ten years later was the subject of an international conference “A Global Assessment of the 1989 *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore*. Local Empowerment and International Cooperation” that was held in Washington, D.C. (U.S.A.) on June 27–30, 1999 in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution (Seitel 2001).

But the harmonious relations between Intangible Cultural Heritage and Folklore were short-lived because their inherent incompatibility could not sustain this union. Four years later, over June 2–14, 2003, a major UNESCO convention gathered in the large conference room in the basement of UNESCO Headquarters at Place de Fontenoy, Paris, to work on the Preliminary Draft Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The first implicit statement had been made in the textual changes in the 1989 *Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore* that fourteen years later became the 2003 *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. In his ethnographic description of the 2003 UNESCO conference Hafstein describes the deletion of the term “folklore” and the insertion of Intangible Cultural Heritage, almost in passing. He writes:

The elusive notion of intangibility refers not to the spectral or ethereal (though it includes stories and rituals relating to ghosts and spirits) but suggests a focus on practices and expressions that do not leave extensive material traces, at least not of monumental pro-

portions. Storytelling, craftsmanship, rituals, dramas, and festivals are prime examples of the sort of cultural representations targeted by the new instrument of heritage policy. These used to be called folklore—a term largely abandoned within UNESCO, though not in some other international organizations. In UNESCO parlance, the practices and expressions formerly known as folklore now come under the rubric of the “intangible cultural heritage.” (Hafstein 2004, iii)¹¹

Nic Craith offers some explanation for the abandonment of folklore among UNESCO members:

[T]he idea of “folklore” was problematic for some. At a joint UNESCO/ Smithsonian Institute conference in 1999, delegates from Africa, the Pacific and Latin America expressed dissatisfaction with the use of the term “folklore” which, for them, had strong European associations and, from their perspective, was primarily used by anthropologists with reference to cultures in the developing world. Instead, they proposed that terms such as “traditional and popular culture” be considered terminology that was already in use anyway. Delegates from the Fiji Islands strongly associated the notion of “folklore” with colonization. They argued that “culture” is not “folklore” but the sacred norms intertwined with their traditional way of life. This association of the concept of “folklore” with colonialism is interesting because for some nations at least, the development of folklore was in reaction to rather than a consequence of colonization. Folklore was a tool of resistance rather than acquiescence, subversiveness rather than subservience. In view of the negativity towards the term “folklore”, the phrase “intangible cultural heritage” was subsequently forwarded. (Craith 2008, 56)¹²

The objection to the term “folklore” on the part of diplomats and cultural experts from previously colonized countries demonstrates that in their views the popular (Beck 1997; Bendix 1998) and the scholarly conceptions of folklore crossed. Folklore scholars have conducted research in oral societies with utmost respect for the peoples, their cultures, and their oral literatures, though, indeed, earlier theories generated a denigrating descriptive term like “primitive” (Greenway

1964), which was associated with long abandoned theories. The radical change in the evaluation of literature in oral cultures is demonstrable in three bibliographies and in an encyclopedia of folklore in Africa (Görög-Karady 1981, 1992; Peek and Yankah 2004; Scheub 1997). Furthermore, in the political sphere, nationalism and the definition of collective selfhood is bound with folklore (Baycroft and Hopkin 2012). It is evidently clear that the diplomats dropped “folklore” through no fault of its own.

But the crux of the matter is not terminological. It is conceptual and rhetorical. First, while the UNESCO program recognizes the intangibility of culture, it conceives of culture in tangible terms of safeguarding, preservation, exhibition, tourism, and commodification, sucking the life out of folklore. Second, scholarly and political discourses are rhetorically distinct from each other. Scholarly discourse is explorative, whereas political and judicial discourse is conclusive, sealed in agreements, conventions, and laws. The operational guidelines of “Intangible Cultural Heritage” are a construct of political negotiations, bargaining, and, on occasion, even financial contribution, to a national cause (Hafstein 2004, 2018). Its manifestations are in normative rules that have judicial authority of inclusion and exclusion. In conferences, conventions, and international negotiations delegates to UNESCO have sought to create an international canon of natural and built monuments to be safeguarded and preserved for the humanity of the future. Such an international action is necessary in face of both the constructive and destructive impulses of societies, but its application to intangible cultural heritage and tradition transforms them into monuments, undermining their valuation in their respective societies and cultures, and turns them into targets of an international gaze. UNESCO and other international cultural-political agencies cemented the relations between folklore and International Cultural Heritage and from its halls this bond emanated to broader circles. Within public discourse it is possible to distinguish two interpretations of the relations between folklore and heritage that are inversions of each other. There is no textual evidence, and if there is it escaped me, that the two cultural theoreticians who formulated them were aware of the writings of each other. Rather they developed their interpretations independently. The cultural historian David Lowenthal (1923–2018) folklorized “Heritage,” considering its practice in literate, urban, and commercial society in terms of the sacred, discerning in it

patterns behavior in traditional societies. In contrast, my good friend the folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett changed folklore into “Heritage” which is made and becomes a cultural construct of commercial economy. She diminished, if not completely denied, the existence of folklore in social reality. Consequently, her folklore theory is based on the proposition that folklore is a “made-up” invention, “a presentation of self in Everyday Life” to modify Erving Goffman’s felicitous title (Goffman 1959).

HERITAGE IN PUBLIC CULTURE

David Lowenthal (1923–2018), a distinguished cultural historian (Gathercole and Lowenthal 1990, 1985, 1998, 2006; Olwig and Lowenthal 2006), has barely mentioned the term “Folklore” in his writings (Lowenthal 1998, 178), and includes only cursory remarks about UNESCO and its “Intangible Cultural Heritage” mission in his last book on the subject (Lowenthal 1998, 7, 20, 230, and 245–46), but he has analyzed extensively the “Heritage Crusade.” Examining this trend in modern society he adopted a folkloristic-anthropological approach and insightfully proposed to consider “Heritage” to be a civic-cultural cult. He opened his book *The Heritage Crusade* (1996) with the following paragraph:

The world rejoices in a newly popular faith: the cult of heritage. To be sure, heritage is as old as humanity. Prehistoric peoples bequeathed goods and goals, legacies benign and malign suffuse Homeric tales, the Old Testament, and Confucian precepts. But only in our time has heritage become a self-conscious creed, whose shrines and icons daily multiply and whose praise suffuses public discourse. (Lowenthal 1998, 1)

The ethnic, national, and even global reverence for antiquity dates to antiquity itself (Beaulieu 1994; Fudge 2000; Jonker 1995, 133–152; Weisberg 2012, 61–71; Winter 2000).¹³ Societies maintained “sites of memory” to use Pierre Nora’s concept, in traditional and modern cultures (Nora 1978, 1984, 1989; see also Ben-Amos and Weissberg 1999, 301–311; Fisch 2008; Halbwachs 1925, 1950, 1971, 1992). The transformation of cultural memory into a cult of “Heage”

implicates it as a civil movement with religious dynamics with its own shrines, monuments, rituals, holy writs, and guardian priests, as well as social functions and spiritual purposes. Cults are not disciplines. They involve veneration not analysis. Although Lowenthal does not offer a systematic analysis of effects of the heritage cult on modern societies, his case studies span the globe from China, through the Near East, Europe, the West Indies, to the United States and Canada. In his conclusion he seeks to respond to those who assail heritage but as an historian his conclusion is as critical:

... attachment to heritage depends on feeling and faith, as opposed to history's ascertained truths. Lack of hard evidence seldom distresses the public at large, who are mostly credulous, undemanding, accustomed to heritage mystique, and often laud the distortions, omissions, and fabrications central to heritage reconstruction. (Lowenthal 1998, 88–104)

Heritage producers and stewards, however, seem increasingly concerned to ground their goods and stories in verifiable evidence. As heritage suffuses more and more everyday life, and claims to property and pride hinge on rival versions of the same experienced past, heritage-mongers feel compelled to cloak wares in historical authenticity. Material relics are scrutinized, memories retrieved, archives examined, monuments restored, reenactments performed, and historic sites interpreted with painstaking precision. Heritage apes scholarship with factoids and footnotes to persuade us that our legacy is grounded in irrefutable evidence (Lowenthal 1998, 249–250).

TURNING FOLKLORE RESEARCH INTO CULTURAL HERITAGE

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, a former president of the American Folklore Society (1991–1992), configures folklore as Lowenthal does “Heritage,” namely as a social fabrication rather than a reality. Writing before his book appeared in print, she states her conceptual preference for “Heritage” over “folklore.” Although she introduces her view of folklore rather innocuously, proposing that “folklore is made not found” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995, 369). But what appears as

a casual comment exposes a radical change in the conception of folklore from a behavioral and cognitive reality to an exhibition in the venues that modern societies make available. She breaks away from the basic tenet upon which it is logically possible to construct a scholarly discipline, transforming research into display. Initially Kirshenblatt-Gimblett herself has balked at her own proposition, qualifying it by stating that it “does not mean that it is fabricated, though fabrication does of course occur” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995, 369). However, her qualified denial underscores the very quality she is hesitant to attribute to folklore, since fabrication is an either/or action. It is impossible to have just “a little bit” of fabrication. Implicitly she follows Hobsbawm’s idea of tradition as an invention (Hobsbawm 1983a, 1983b), though not explicitly quoting or rephrasing him, but if folklore is made up and fabricated what is it if not an invention? (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1988, 192). She overlooks the fact that the folklore which is exhibited in museums and staged for tourists is not a collective creation of the “folk” but an institutional fabrication of a community for the purposes of self-presentation in public spaces.

The conception of folklore as a fabrication is a break with a century-long endeavor (Bauman 1969; Burstein 1957; Dorson 1973; Dundes 1966; Edmonson 1971; Glennie 1889; Gomme 1885, 1908; Hartland 1891; Krappé 1930; Limón 2014; Oring 2019; Ortutay 1955; Pound 1952) to establish folklore as a scholarly discipline in the social sciences and the humanities. Such a proposition was subject to intellectual trends, political ideals, and pressures, research methods in the social sciences and humanities, but its basic tenet has been that folklore is a social reality that exists and functions in social and cultural life following principles that can be discovered. It is a reality that has a history and a presence, both of which require systematic investigation and interpretation and, like language itself, is a universal. The science of folklore is the discipline that investigates the subject of folklore. Such a terminological dualism is part of its history (Burne 1885). Obviously, the scientific quality of its research merges social and humanistic, rather than biological and physical sciences (Nagel 1961, 447–546; Ryan 1970). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett proposes that a break with this fundamental conception of folklore research is the solution to the folklore crisis. She suggests

to take the popular “misperceptions” of folklore as indicative of the truths of heritage as they emerge from contemporary practice. Heritage, for the sake of my argument, is the transvaluation of the obsolete, the mistaken, the outmoded, the dead, and the defunct. Heritage is created through a process of exhibition (as knowledge, as performance, as museum display). Exhibition endows heritage thus conceived with a second life. My argument is built around five propositions: (1) Heritage is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past; (2) Heritage is a “value added” industry; (3) Heritage produces the local for export; (4) A hallmark of heritage is the problematic relationship of its objects to its instruments; and (5) A key to heritage is its virtuality, whether in the presence or the absence of actualities. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995, 369)

But the folklore crisis has occurred in the academic not in the popular and public space. Any proposals to resolve it must address its particular qualities, features, and issues as a scholarly discipline. Transferring folklore to popular and public culture of modern literate and urban society at best would illuminate the particular features that folklore acquires when it is displayed and staged “for export,” becoming a subject of modern popular perceptions. These are not “misperceptions” as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett labels them. Rather they have their own validity in the context in modern literate society that has generated its own means, ideas, and institutions to address folklore. Its reconceptualization as “Intangible Cultural Heritage” is certainly one of them. But when heritage begins, tradition ends. The packaging of traditional culture for modern consumers deflates it from the symbolic values that these words and objects have within their own respective communities. Traditional culture, and its tangible and intangible representation, becomes memorabilia and its exhibition has its own poetic principles (Karp and Lavine 1991). Objects in the museum shop, or even in the museum display cases, do not have the capacity to function as they do in their cultural contexts. There, they have reached the calm water of virtuality. With all the care and thoughtfulness that museum curators exhibit ethnographic and folkloristic objects (Alivizatou 2012; Karp and Lavine 1991; La Follette 2013) and with all the reconstruction of the indigenous cultural, historical, and religious background that they create, they cannot override the obvious fact

that these objects are in a museum display and not in their indigenous context. No wonder that at the present time the people for whom these museum objects have religious and symbolic significance are indignant, witnessing the use of their cultural symbol as exotic and curious objects (Sleeper-Smith 2009).

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett often quotes John Comaroff who reportedly said that “folklore, let me tell you, is one of the most dangerous words in the English language” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995, 368; 1998a, 298; 1998b, 1,162). At the end of that paragraph from which she quotes, John Comaroff is also quoted as saying, “what museums allow us to do? They allow us to be voyeurs, to look in and not be disturbed and not be vexed by the differences” (Gray and Taylor 1992). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, in fact, reaffirms Comaroff’s observation, pointing out that “[t]ourism and heritage are collaborative industries, heritage converting locations into destinations and tourism making them economically viable exhibits of themselves. Locations become museums of themselves within a tourism economy” (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995, 371).

Tourism is another form of voyeurism. The voluminous scholarship about tourism¹⁴ concerns itself primarily with the tourists and their perspectives and issues, considering tourism as a leisure activity that is democratized travel and a mode of pilgrimage that has a dimension of neocolonialism, but nevertheless impact the tourists as an acculturative process that effects their ethnic relations and subjective, or “emic,” perspectives (Cohen 1984, 374–376). While such a one-sided approach may be valid in tourism of nature, archaeology, and architecture, once the tourists’ gaze shifts from natural and constructed objects to humans and their cultures, tourism acquires a dual-perspective of those who gaze and those who are gazed at. The gazing tourists approach their living and material objects with curiosity, fascination, and with empathetic alienation, wondering about the authenticity of the sights they witness, whereas the people at whom they gaze seek to reap economic benefits from exhibiting their lives and essential and unique cultural symbols to strangers, turning them into a commodity (Bowen 2018; Cleveland and Murray 1997; Cohen 1988; Comaroff and Comaroff 2009; Evans-Pritchard 1989; Foltz 2005; Goldstein 2007; Green 2007; Markwick 2001; Nash 2000; Peach 2007; Pigliascio 2010; Shereman 2008; Zhiqin 2015).

As a concept, authenticity is a paradox since it is conceived only in its absence. The starting point of “the search of authenticity” is its absence. In the interpretation of Jacob Golomb, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) considers “authenticity as a negative term. Its presence is discerned in its absence, in the passionate search for it, in inauthenticity and in various acts of ‘bad faith’” (Golomb 1995, 7), that is to say, authenticity becomes relevant when inauthenticity occurs. Cultural authenticity and tourism have been the subject of extensive scholarship, often searching for the authentic in the inauthentic (Bendix 1997, 2018; Cohen 1988, 2007; Cohen and Cohen 2012; Desmond 1997; Ehrentraut 1993; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1988; Lindholm 2008; MacCannell 1973; Pincus 1996); the staged performance for tourists is inherently inauthentic or at most it is a staged authenticity (MacCannell 1973, 2011, 13–34; Williams 2006).

Heritage is a foreign country for folklore.¹⁵ In order to obtain citizenship, its hosts, the stagers and the exhibitors, transform it from a system of symbols in culture to exhibits of culture, from indigenous performances into staging of indigeneity and from culture into a commodity. Although both folklore and “Intangible Cultural Heritage” are abstract concepts, the idea of their mutual interaction does not involve their reification, rather their mutual relations take place through cultural agents, social institutions, communities, organizations, and social actions, within such venues as tourism, commodification, and legalization.

Surely, commodification of folklore occurs already in traditional cultures. The performance of epics, for example, requires prolonged training, and therefore epic singers receive monetary rewards for their performances. In some societies families or guilds have a monopoly on the performance of such epics as the “Sunjata Epic,” and others, and are duly rewarded financially.¹⁶ Weavers, carvers, and bronze casters, as well as other artists, follow similar professional and economic patterns that ensure not only creative but also economic control over their performances and creations (e.g., Abiødun et al. 1994; d’Azavedo 1973). But in oral society commodification is performance centered. The local storytellers, singers, and epic reciters receive their monetary reward for their performance and not for their tales or songs which are the verbal, visual, or musical substance of their community or family. In the realm of folklore, themes, narrative

plots, and heroic patterns circle the globe and transcend linguistic boundaries. Once oral literary forms and specific poems and tales crossed the bridge into the commercial and literate space of modern or modernized societies, through whatever transference agents, the state and large corporations set their eyes on them and sought to turn them into their own possession (Hafstein 2018, 21–52; Rios 2014).

Finally, the most drastic uprooting and sterilization of folklore is turning it into an entertainment for “export,” as a staged performance of the collective self. In this way a society abdicates its collective social and cultural identity and turns itself into a staged show. There is no way but to conclude that with such a significant degree of separation Intangible Cultural Heritage is not a mate for the discipline of folklore.

I would like to conclude by citing an Irish poet and a Jewish writer who addressed the tourist gaze and the draining of cultural symbols of their significance, turning them into the staging of folklore in modern society, transforming them into Intangible Cultural Heritage long before UNESCO coined the term. I must apologize, because I quoted both of them in one of my previous essays (Ben-Amos 1981, 9 and 15), but I find both of them compellingly insightful in addressing the transference of folklore from traditional life into modern society.

The first is the great Irish poet and novelist Patrick Kavanagh (1904–1967)¹⁷ who in his poem “The Great Hunger” (1942) wrote about Patrick Maguire:

The world looks on
 And talks of the peasant:
 The peasant has no worries;
 In his little lyrical fields
 He ploughs and sows;
 He eats fresh food,
 He loves fresh women,
 He is his own master
 As it was in the Beginning
 The simpleness of peasant life.
 The birds that sing for him are eternal choirs,
 Everywhere he walks there are flowers.
 His heart is pure,

His mind is clear,
 He can talk to God as Moses and Isaiah talked—
 The peasant who is only one remove from the beasts he drives.
 The travelers stop their cars to gape over the green bank
 Into his fields.
 There is the source from which all cultures rise,
 And all religions,
 There is the pool in which the poet dips
 And the musician.
 Without the peasant base civilization must die,
 Unless the clay is in the mouth the singer's singing is useless.
 The travelers touch the root of the grass and feel renewed
 When they grasp the steering wheels again.
 The peasant is the unspoiled child of Prophecy.
 The peasant is all virtues—let us salute him without irony
 The peasant ploughman who is half a vegetable—
 Who can react to sun and rain and sometimes even
 Regret that the Maker of Light had not touched him more intensely.
 (Kavanagh 1942, 28–29)

“Without irony” Kavanagh claims, but in his poem, irony is abundant. In contrast, the Hebrew novelist and 1966 Nobel Laureate, Shmuel Yosef Agnon (1887–1970) addresses the transformation from commitment to a staged performance by bluntly considering folklore as heritage, though at the time he wrote the distinction between the two was not available to him.

In a short story titled “Edo and Enam,” originally published in 1951 and appearing in English in his book *Two Tales* (Agnon 1951; 1966, 210), there is a dialogue between its main principal characters; both of them are scholars investigating the culture of a remote Jewish community—one collects old books, manuscripts, and amulets, and the other records oral traditions. The manuscript collector says:

Besides, all these scholars are modern men; even if you were to reveal the properties of the charms, they would only laugh at you; and if they bought them, it would be as specimens of folklore. Ah folklore, folklore! Everything which is not material for scientific research they treat as folklore. Have they not made our holy Torah into

either one or the other? People live out their lives according to the Torah, they lay down their lives for the heritage of their fathers; then along come the scientists, and make the Torah into “research material,” and the ways of our fathers into—folklore.¹⁸

Writing in 1951 while finding refuge in the apartment of his friend Gershom Scholem (1897–1982), Agnon anticipated Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s equation of folklore with heritage as a culture for export with a rejection.

NOTES

¹ Professor Dan Ben-Amos delivered this lecture at the Interim Conference for Folk Narrative Research on September 1–5, 2015 in Ankara as the keynote lecturer invited by the Hacettepe University Turkish Folklore Department.

² The article appeared anonymously in the editorial office of the *Journal of American Folklore*, and the editor at the time, Jan Harold Brunvand, published it with his own initials as a signature. The public identification of the author has been made by John McLeish (1980, 136) who notes about this essay: “A satirical ‘How to write folklore articles?’ A guide, originally circulated as a mock chain letter and here printed without any indication of authorship.”

³ Hesiod, 2017, *Theogony and Works and Days*, translated by Kimberly Johnson (Evanston: Northwestern University), 127.

⁴ For studies about him see: Bullough 2004; Duckett 1951; Houwen and MacDonald 1998.

⁵ Extensive scholarship about the folklore and vernacular languages in the works of these authors is available. A selection for studies on Shakespeare: Artese 2015; Brunvand 1966, 1991; Cole 1981. Studies on Boccaccio: Lee 1909; Kirkham, Sherberg, and Smarr 2013. Studies on Poliziano: Goodman 1998; Poliziano 1997, 2004.

⁶ For studies about him see Berkner 1972; Bolz 2011; Kahmann 2015; Linke 1990, 121–124; Loose 1940; Simonsfeld 1898; Wiegelmann 1979.

⁷ About him see: Grimm 1964.

⁸ Only as I was preparing the text of this lecture for publication I learned from Jessica Hemmings, the editor of the journal *Folklore*, that the first department of folklore in England will open at the University of Hertfordshire, starting during the 2019–2020 academic year.

⁹ The above paragraph is quoted, with minor editorial changes, from my review of Lee Haring, ed. *Grand Theory in Folkloristics* (2016); see: Ben-Amos 2018, 203.

¹⁰ Downloaded from: <https://www.herts.ac.uk/courses/ma-folklore-studies>.

¹¹ One of the other “international organizations” to which Hafstein refers but does not specify is likely the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) which has an “Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore” with which the American Folklore Society maintained official contact. A statement drafted by J. Sanford Rikoon, Burt Feintuch, and Timothy Lloyd and approved by the American Folklore Society Executive Board in December 2002 was presented to WIPO that same month. See: Anonymous 2004.

¹² Indeed, in response to a conceived condescending attitude to African traditional literature expressed in the term “oral literature,” and its inherent contradiction, the Ugandan linguist Pio Zirimu (d. 1977) proposed to replace it with his new coinage of “orature.” In its context the elements of African orature are myth and legends, tales, enigmas, proverbs, songs, currencies, incantations, epics, maxims, riddles fables, genealogies, lullabies, and sung rhymes. See: Kolyang 2008.

¹³ I would like to thank my friends Stephen Tinney and Grant Frame for directing me to these studies.

¹⁴ For a selection see: Cohen 1972, 1979b, 1984; Lanfant et al. 1995; MacCannell 2011; Nash 1996, Wallace 2005.

¹⁵ See: Lowenthal 1985.

¹⁶ See: Ben-Amos 1975, 36; Belcher 1999; Conrad 2004; Hale 1998; Hoffman 2000; Innes 1974; Johnson 1986; Johnson et al. 1997.

¹⁷ See about him: Nemo 1973; Quinn 1991, 2001.

¹⁸ For a discussion of Agnon’s attitude to folklore see: Ben-Amos 1988.

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