

Heritage and Festivals in Europe

Performing Identities

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Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	vii
<i>List of tables</i>	ix
<i>List of contributors</i>	x
<i>Foreword</i>	xv
REGINA F. BENDIX	
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xviii
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xix
1 Heritages, identities and Europe: exploring cultural forms and expressions	1
ULLRICH KOCKEL, MÁIRÉAD NIC CRAITH, CRISTINA CLOPOT AND BAIBA TJARVE	
2 On the relationship between performance and intangible cultural heritage	18
SIMON McKERRELL AND KERSTIN PFEIFFER	
3 Comparative aspects of the Song and Dance Celebration of the Baltic countries in the context of nation-branding processes	29
RŪTA MUKTUPĀVELA AND ANDA LAĶE	
4 The construction of belonging and Otherness in heritage events	47
CRISTINA CLOPOT AND CATHERINE McCULLAGH	
5 Nostalgic festivals: the case of Cappadox	63
BABAK TAHERI, MARTIN JOSEPH GANNON AND HOSSEIN OLYA	
6 Events that want to become heritage: vernacularisation of ICH and the politics of culture and identity in European public rituals	79
ALESSANDRO TESTA	

7	Performing identities and communicating ICH: from local to international strategies	95
	LAURENT SÉBASTIEN FOURNIER	
8	Memory, pride and politics on parade: the Durham Miners' Gala	110
	ANDREAS PANTAZATOS AND HELAINE SILVERMAN	
9	Sound structure as political structure in the European folk festival orchestra <i>La Banda Europa</i>	128
	SIMON McKERRELL	
10	Performing Scots-European heritage, ' <i>For A' That!</i> '	141
	MAIRI McFADYEN AND MÁIRÉAD NIC CRAITH	
11	European Capitals of Culture: discourses of Europeanness in Valletta, Plovdiv and Galway	156
	CRISTINA CLOPOT AND KATERINA STRANI	
12	Negotiating contested heritages through theatre and storytelling	173
	KERSTIN PFEIFFER AND MAGDALENA WEIGLHOFFER	
13	Commemorating vanished 'homelands': displaced Germans and their <i>Heimat Europa</i>	188
	ULLRICH KOCKEL	
14	Afterword: festival as heritage / heritage as festival	205
	VALDIMAR TR. HAFSTEIN	
	<i>Index</i>	211

6 Events that want to become heritage

Vernacularisation of ICH and the politics of culture and identity in European public rituals

Alessandro Testa

'Participatory festivals are neither simple drunken revels nor mystical survivals of ancestral rites but resonant forms of collective action in response to a global crisis of local communities'.

(Noyes 2003: 12)

The scholarship about festivals, festive heritage and the politics of culture and identity during/around/based on such events has been expanding fast in the last few decades. Since this chapter cannot be exhaustive about the state of the art of any of those issues, I will focus on a limited set of problems, intersecting theoretical reflections with evidence taken from my own ethnographic fieldworks.

The 'events' I refer to in the title are structured forms of collective action (Handelman 1999; Noyes 2003), performances which have undergone a process of 'heritagisation' (or 'heritage-making') (Hafstein 2012; Hemme, Tauschek and Bendix 2007; Smith and Akagawa 2009; Logan, Kochel and Nic Craith 2015; Testa 2016a). More precisely, I focus on examples of 'public rituals', a category which here is used as a synonym for 'festivals' or 'public festive performances' – I prefer the term 'public ritual' in order to emphasise that there is always a ritual dimension in festivals, whereas there is not always a festive dimension in other types of rituals or performances (Testa 2014a). These are, in fact, among the types of phenomena once considered typically 'folkloric', in Europe at least, and which today, after a terminological and ontological shift that is very interesting to study *per se* (Testa 2016a), are often recognised as pieces of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) by UNESCO.

The European dimension of festive/ritual heritagisation has been the object of a precocious scholarly interest (Boissevain 1992). This tradition of studies intercepts and builds upon a socially transversal renewed interest in the past and for local traditions, and for new modes of social memory construction and expression, in connection with interwoven phenomena of ritualisation, re-enchantment and musealisation (Testa 2017a). These processes took place roughly between the 1960s and the late 1980s, peaking in the 1990s, and represent a trend that has its *raison d'être* in a rather complex cluster of socio-cultural factors affecting European societies in the post-Fordist, late modern era (Boissevain 1992; Hodges 2011; Macdonald 2013; Testa 2014b, 2017a).

The institutionalisation of these phenomena from about the 1990s and then their 'heritagisation' proper from the beginning of this century have brought about the necessity of a different kind of critical reflection, with a focus on the many existing relations between Europe, European identities and ICH. Studies have focussed not only on the 'top' and 'etic' level (the institutions and agencies, the functionaries and academics), as well as on the 'below' and 'emic' one (the local communities, the 'natives' or 'tradition-holders'), but also on the circulations, interactions and negotiations between these two conceptual poles (Macdonald 2013; Nic Craith 2008; Shore 2000; Wilken 2012; Taylor 2016). This stream of works is now solidly established within the broader field of the anthropology of Europe.

Critical studies about cultural heritage and/in Europe have generally been problematised with respect to collective identity/identities construction and expression (Delanty 1999; Johler 2003; Kuutma 2007; Nic Craith 2008; Niedermüller and Stoklund 2001) and the problem of their 'nestedness' (Herb and Kaplan 1999), an interesting aspect ethnographically observable at different levels (local, regional, national, European) and transversally across them. This has led to the theorisation of a specific 'memory-heritage-identity complex' (Macdonald 2013), which would characterise all European societies, albeit differently conjugated nationally, regionally and locally.

My interpretative endeavour stands on a critical and reflexive study of the issues previously outlined, in order to understand the relational and processual nature of heritage-making processes, the emergence of heritage poetics and discourses, and the establishment of heritage politics and practices at all levels (from local to global, at the upper and grassroots levels, and within all the gradations, intersections and intervals between these conceptual ends). In order to achieve this, I have chosen the 'methodological agnostic' approach as theorised by Brumann (2014), that is, 'an 'agnostic' study of heritage [that] does not posit a priori that heritage is an empty signifier, an entirely arbitrary and socially determined ascription, but takes people's heritage experience and beliefs seriously' (Brumann 2014: 180). I have also tried to reunite the somewhat artificial distinction, today considered almost self-explanatory, between tangible and intangible (Testa 2016a, forthcoming); therefore, I fully endorse the idea of an integrated or 'symbiotic' concept of heritage, 'one that merges the tangible with the intangible, and thus reinforces the indivisible nature of heritage, transcending the conventional dualism' (Nic Craith and Kockel 2015: 429).

With the idea of an event 'wanting' to become heritage, I intend to highlight the process of emergence of a heritage sensibility among various social groups and agents (locals, organisers, performers, public functionaries, aficionados, tourists or visitors, ethnologists, etc.), actually animating and shaping an event and participating or being otherwise involved in it. I refer both to festivals undergoing heritagisation and those which have already been officially recognised as heritage, in one form or another. This emergence is characteristic of UNESCO ICH applications and recognitions. However, as will be made evident in the forthcoming pages, it can also characterise other external

or official recognitions (e.g. being enlisted in national or NGOs' lists) as well as less formalised or 'vernacular' ways of conceptualising festive events and public rituals, ways that are compatible, comparable or more or less associable with what is today categorised as ICH.

While referring to other cases taken from the literature, I will focus especially on three case studies that have been at the centre of my historical and ethnographic investigations in the last ten years, with the aim of operating a critical kind of comparison (i.e. a differential and relational as well as analogical type of comparison).

6.1 The case studies

In the revitalised carnival pantomime of the deer-man, in Castelnuovo al Volturno, a small village in the central Apennines (Testa 2014b, 2017a, 2017b, forthcoming), the process of heritage-making has acquired a peculiar form. This pantomime displays some rather archaic features, among which are a set of characteristic masks and the ritualised hunt for a man disguised as a deer. Like many others in the mountainous areas of Europe, this festival went through a period of neglect during the 1950s and 1960s, only to be reborn afterwards, from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, when it was revitalised, refunctionalised and charged with new forms, meanings and functions. The revival was associated with institutionalisation (in different forms) and also with the development of a heritage discourse around the revitalised tradition, which in the last few decades has become one of the 'cultural brands', identity markers and tourist attractions of the area. The fact of being associated with a primitivistic, magical and 'pagan' imaginary has fostered sentiments of authenticity, typicity and therefore the need for conservation and promotion through heritagisation. In fact, 'why does an "ancient" festival function more efficiently in the construction and the maintenance of the locality? Because the stretching of the temporal depth of the festival means the widening of its symbolic density and stratification' (Faeta 2005: 163). There have been extensive talks, in the last few years, about a possible application to UNESCO.

Every year for almost fifty years now, a very special carnival is celebrated in Solsona, in central Catalonia (Vilaseca and Trilla 2011; Testa forthcoming). After having been prohibited during Francoism, it became one of the vehicles of the Catalan reaction against the regime in the early seventies, a veritable symbol of political and cultural liberation, and a free expression of Catalanism – similar to the more famous 'Patum' festival in Berga (Noyes 2003), which was the first Spanish festival recognised by UNESCO, in 2004. In 1979, the Spanish government declared Solsona's carnival '*Fiesta de Interés Turístico Nacional*' ('Festival of National Touristic Interest'), despite its then emerging (and today explicit) anti-Castilian stance. This recognition, which has existed in Spain for more than half a century, is comparable to other early listings of folkloric/festive events in Europe, and can be considered, *mutatis mutandis*, a national precursor of the transnational UNESCO ICH scheme. After the recognition, during the 1980s, the

festivity became the host of a series of ritualised acts and other performances, which structured a then still young event. In the last few decades, the festival has grown exponentially, becoming a mass event participated in by not only most of the townsfolk and visitors from surrounding areas and regions but also from Barcelona. Today, the Solsona carnival week and its inner rituals last for seven days, during which they occupy and hegemonise the public sphere completely. This festival bears a great significance for the local community and is participated in massively, with extreme enthusiasm and even rapture. It contributes to the configuration of the social fabric, structuring and formalising an entire set of interpersonal and intergroup relationships, mostly through the creation and reproduction of ‘colles’ and ‘comparses’ (two very specific kinds of network that function within, during and for the carnival). More importantly, it makes it possible for the people of Solsona to articulate and express their ‘being Catalans’ in central Catalonia.

The *Masopust* (Czech word for ‘Carnival’) in Hlinsko v Čechách in Bohemia is characterised by what in the English-speaking world is known as ‘mumming’ (i.e. door-to-door processions of masked men who perform dances and other pseudo-ritual actions to ensure, they claim, good luck and fertility) (Blahůšek and Vojancová 2011; Testa 2017a, 2017b, forthcoming). The *Masopust* in Hlinsko exhibits many features in common with other carnival-like festivals in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and elsewhere in central-eastern European Slavic countries. Unlike many similar manifestations, it was not prohibited during socialist times in Czechoslovakia, although the official position of the Communist Party towards this kind of events was one of discouragement, if not open condemnation (Testa 2016b). In any case, this festival also went through a phase of partial disinterest during the 1980s, but during the 1990s, with the political-economic transition that followed the fall of Communism, it acquired a new relevance and popularity, which has since continued to grow. This growth or re-growth in popularity was crowned by an important recognition: *Masopust* in Hlinsko and in three surrounding villages was included on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2010. The coming of UNESCO to Hlinsko and the heritagisation dynamics have initiated a set of changes both within the festival and in the broader social contexts in which it takes place. Several adjustments and alterations have affected the post-transition and post-UNESCO event, namely in its calendar structure, its local perception and in the ritual structure of the performances: as it has been written, ‘by attempting to preserve spaces, practices, and objects, UNESCO experts and national heritage professionals effectively transform them’ (Berliner 2012: 771).

6.2 Localisations, adjustments and transformations: the vernacularisation of ICH

Although many claims have been made about the risk of a homogenised and homogenising conception and application of the UNESCO ICH and, by metonymy, of other national or regional schemes that inevitably, in the current globalised arena, are influenced by its nomenclature and taxonomy, the now

abundant ethnographic evidence about ICH and related matters tells a different story: local, vernacular variants of the ICH discourse and politics of culture – and of the concept of ‘folklore’ that lies, genealogically, beneath ICH (Testa 2016a) – have been emerging ever since the formalisation of the Convention in 2003. True, the universalisation of UNESCO heritage conception based on Western, liberal and upper-class criteria has led to the emergence of a veritable Authorised Heritage Discourse (Smith 2006), which has also been called the ‘*expression d’une économie morale idéologiquement occidentale et néolibérale*’ (Bortolotto 2011: 21–22), and a ‘worldwide mentality’ (Bendix 2009: 257). Nevertheless, once situated in specific contexts, this discursive, (geo)political and ideological framework can acquire different traits and even be re-thought and reconfigured. There are at least two levels in which this contextualisation can be observed and analysed: a comparative one, the (pan-)European dimension, with its specific stress on history, sense of European ‘exceptionalism’ and characteristic patterned forms of ‘past-presencing’ (Macdonald 2013), and the micro/local one, where vernacular forms of heritage, heritagisation and situated politics of culture manifest themselves as ‘*mises en pratique localisées de l’“idée de patrimoine” [...] qui devraient être analysées comme des adaptations d’une certaine vision qui s’est diffusée à travers le monde*’ (Bondaz et al. 2014: 10). Accordingly, ethnologists have attempted to draw a more detailed picture of the heritage discourse without losing sight of the broader framework (Adell et al. 2015), trying to capture the dynamicity of processes of circulation, hybridation, syncretism and crossed influences between different social actors and institutions operating on the ICH scene: different local groups and individuals, institutions and agencies and their tribes (UNESCO experts and personnel, public functionaries and bureaucrats, academics, experts and the like), aficionados, tourists, etc. It cannot be stressed enough that ‘these connections cannot be characterised as linear or top-down, and they do not simply illustrate the entrance of international discourses on a local or national level. On the contrary, they symbolise the complex paths taken in the production of an intangible cultural heritage discourse’ (Tauschek 2011: 55).

These local appropriations and vernacularisation happen at the linguistic/terminological level already: in the three case studies previously presented, the word ‘heritage’ and its correspondent in the respective languages (‘*patrimonio*’, ‘*patrimoni*’, ‘*dědictví*’) is not the only one, and sometimes not the most important one, used at the emic level to refer to the heritagised events. In fact, in all of my ethnographic investigations, the expression ‘intangible cultural heritage’ (which still retains a certain technical connotation) is used mostly by functionaries and experts and only seldom by other categories of social agents – unlike its simpler version ‘heritage’, much more diffused and used among all categories and classes of people. The term itself, ‘heritage’, has slowly but continuously made its way into different social niches, transcending its etic connotation and becoming not only a label but also a tool used by social actors for social negotiations, political recognition, identity claims, religious agendas, economic interests and other motives. As one of the symbolic mechanics in the functioning of the politics

of culture in a given context, heritage can also be used as a political tool, contributing to the establishment of hierarchies and authorities. In the carnival of Castelnuovo al Volturno, the management and promotion of the event and other correlated dynamics have intersected or collided with political authorities and with individual ambitions, whereas in Hlinsko v Čechách an evident continuity – or even synergy – of intentions could be observed between the public administration, UNESCO personnel, native functionaries and other prominent figures of local public life (Testa 2014c, 2017b). In Solsona's festival, likewise, the level of entanglement between the administrative exercise of power, cultural politics and policies, and the political positioning of certain individuals and groups has also assumed rather interesting forms. All these examples demonstrate that, if on the one hand the symbolic capital of the heritagised festival is expressed differently and used for a variety of purposes, on the other it is also easily and often converted into political or social capital, or even, as will be shown in the following section, into economic capital (Testa 2014a), structuring a wide range of social dynamics that transcend the time/space framework of the events themselves.

One way of looking at the vernacularisation of the heritage discourse and practices is to consider the general transformations that have been observed comparatively and theorised/named in the last few decades in the literature. These general processes of change and adjustment constitute now a rich collection of 'ations', among which are revitalisation, refunctionalisation, restoration, ritualisation, folklorisation, institutionalisation, bureaucratisation, petrification, falsification, ossification, touristification, massification, homogenisation, contamination, mediatization, commodification, commercialisation, sacralisation, fetishisation, musealisation – and the list could go on. These are some of the transformations that are at the base – and are the object – of vernacularly inflected expressions of macro-processes of societal (economic, political, religious, etc.) changes at the micro-level of localities and communities. These locally observable processes have in fact been happening in Europe and globally, albeit unevenly, during the last few decades (the late modern times). They have triggered, among other things, a general ontological as well as a practical reconfiguration of local traditions and of the very notion of 'tradition' (Testa 2017b), which is also constitutional of the very idea of ICH (Testa 2016a). They have also triggered a deeper restructuring of the symbolic order of local communities, as demonstrated clearly in my case studies. This symbolic restructuring has, in turn, determined a certain taxonomic polarisation, rather widespread throughout Europe, centred around a few conceptual oppositions, such as tradition versus modernity, authenticity versus inauthenticity, genuine versus commercialised or touristified, local (typical and different) versus global (massified and homogenised). In my publications about the previously presented case studies, most of those 'ations' and subsequent polarisations are analysed and critically discussed with reference to historical and ethnographic evidence, whereas, for obvious reasons of space, in the following pages I will focus on only some of them.

6.3 Commodification, touristification and musealisation

If there is a problematic notion associated with all the phenomena mentioned in the previous paragraph, that notion is ‘authenticity’ (and therefore ‘inauthenticity’), one of the conceptual black diamonds in the kin-disciplines of anthropology, folkloristics and heritage studies (Bendix 1997; Bortolotto 2013; Brumann 2014; Macdonald 2013: 109–136). In ICH-related issues, authenticity and inauthenticity have been problematised especially with respect to the interrelated processes of commodification and touristification, which have both featured in my case studies, especially in Castelnuovo and Hlinsko, and are actually often observable in many other European public rituals. The UNESCO ICH itself, in spite of its having taken a dislike to the term ‘authenticity’, continues to be based upon and foster social poetics of authenticity: ‘[although] rules about inappropriate vocabulary may eventually expunge the term “authenticity” from UNESCO documents, the values conveyed by this word are not likely to be eradicated from heritage discourse since the two are closely interrelated’ (Bortolotto 2013: 78). In the case of ‘traditional’ public rituals like carnivals, which are very often either old festivals or so considered, this critical observation is particularly piercing, because in these cases “‘traditional” means not only old, but also original and authentic’ (Istenič 2012: 79); moreover, ‘what is historical and typical is authentic, and it is assumed that authenticity is objectively ascertainable’ (Handler 1988: 200). Very often, for this kind of festivals, the best ‘historicity’ or ‘type of past’, in a manner of speaking, is the antique time of pagan festivals. The locals engage in ‘popular Frazerism’ (Testa 2017b), that is, an operation of ‘cultural bricolage’ and symbolic manipulation, circulation and diffusion of a popularised version of Frazer’s theses on European agrarian festivities and folk rituals. These include, for instance, those concerning the notion of ritually fostered fertility, agrarian magic, the supposed pagan origins of carnival and other European festivals and their being a ‘survival’ of ancient rituals, at times considered to be of presumed unfathomable antiquity. This ‘sense of the antique’, more than any possible and actual antique feature, which can be easily altered or even invented, is one of the factors that permit binding a tradition and the people who practise it to a past that can be used to enhance collective sentiments of belonging and identity, as has emerged clearly in the ethnographies I undertook in Castelnuovo and Hlinsko. These poetics and practices of time and ‘past presencing’ produce in turn symbolic depth, which fuels social memory and usually translates into sentiments of typicity, originality and authenticity. Thus can be explained the emic usage of adjectives like ‘very ancient’, ‘Dionysian’ and ‘pagan’, often associated with these rituals: the equation at work is that the more remote the evoked past is, the more ‘authentic’ the tradition. Hence, once the oblivion endangering the local tradition is ‘defeated’ through revitalisation (Macdonald 2013: 152), and authenticity is so ‘ascertained’ and felt, it can then be itself commodified: it becomes the additional value needed by the local tradition/event/heritage to be ‘offered’, ‘sold’ and ‘consumed’.

The commodification of 'authentic' festive or ritual forms of ICH, like those of my three ethnographic examples, shows three distinct but correlated aspects:

1. the juridical and institutional framework comprising conceptual as well as factual matters of cultural property and ownership (Hafstein 2007; Tauschek 2010);
2. the somewhat spontaneous emergence of a micro-economy (a 'market') around the festival;
3. the actual will of 'selling' one's heritage for economic reasons (for a profit).

These widespread aspects have been associated with reconfiguration and/or loss of the social meaning of the events (Macdonald 2013: 110–112; Noyes 2003: 215–236). The second aspect among the aforementioned should be duly acknowledged: in Solsona, I have observed the development of an extremely complex economic dimension, made up of the production and circulation of equipment, gadgets and carnival-related promotional materials, publications and audio-visual products, public subventions, private sponsorships, financial transactions of different kinds, lotteries, trades and purchases, accommodation, restoration and other services being offered and demanded; not circumscribed in the time-space brackets of the festival, this ritual micro-economy actually goes beyond them, manifesting itself throughout the year and transcending the locality of the event, but yet being deeply rooted in it.

The last of those three aspects also raises the question of why certain traditions and not others have actually been revitalised and heritagised: the answer is that, sometimes, it certainly happened due to their potential marketability, even though, as has been affirmed by Gerald Creed, in the same vein as in the citation by Dorothy Noyes that opens this chapter, 'commodifying the ritual for a tourist market is not simply a case of capitalism's well-known co-optation of critical practices into marketable goods but as equally the grassroots product of ritual aficionados trying to ensure the perpetuation of the practices in a radically changing context' (Creed 2011: 27). In Hlinsko, for instance, the revitalisation and heritagisation of the *Masopust* have followed the evident degradation of the material living conditions of the local communities during the post-socialist transition, which led to a generalised situation of social stress, characterised by the diminishing or dismissal of rural and industrial productive activities, economic impoverishment, emigration towards bigger cities and consequential depopulation. A similar situation of social stress and degradation has been happening in Castelnuovo for several decades now, and here again the revitalisation of the Carnival emerged in the years when the crisis became manifest. I am not making an argument for a cause-effect relation (revitalisation/heritagisation and an increase in symbolic value as a direct consequence of material deterioration or loss) but a correlation can certainly be hypothesised.

Commodification is also strongly associated with internal or external visitors ('tourists') who may be willing to pay to participate in or just witness the rituals, or be differently involved in the events or buy something connected with

them. Unlike the case of Solsona, where the entire town seems to enjoy the presence of masses of tourists (probably because of the tradition being younger and consequentially its sense of historicity and authenticity thinner), in Hlinsko and Castelnuovo the presence of tourists is usually met with mixed feelings by the locals participating in the rituals. Unsurprisingly, the literature about rituals, festivals and tourism has dwelled on the ambiguities and inconsistencies in the local perception of tourism and the tourists (Isnart 2014; Macdonald 2013; Picard and Robinson 2006). This perception can sometimes be 'detrimental of the local people's sense of the meaningfulness of the ritual' (Macdonald 2013: 111). This usually results in implicit or explicit emic positioning and the emergence of a certain polarisation among the locals, with attitudes oscillating between the hardcore purists who utterly dislike or despise the presence of tourists, considering it a symptom of massification and trivialisation, and those who contrariwise show appreciation and even support for the visits. Many gradations subsist between these two poles, and sometimes different postures can even be incorporated, seemingly contradictorily, by the same individual, according to the circumstances.

Institutions, among which is UNESCO, usually openly support 'cultural' and 'sustainable' tourism, considered a possible source of local development. This motivation can also subsist at the grassroots level, when communities or some groups within them think of tourism also in terms of indirect 'proof' that the local traditions (whether or not officially recognised as cultural heritage) are worthy of preservation and promotion. It is precisely in this conceptual segment that the paradox of tourism emerges clearly: on the one hand, tourism is desired as a source of cultural recognition and/or for economic reasons; on the other, however, the more a tradition becomes the object of popular interest and tourists' presence and participation, the less 'authentic' it might be considered, for tourism also brings sentiments of dispossession and 'cultural contamination' (Meethan 2001: 90).

The point of view of tourists is worth mentioning because it also seems to stand on a rather paradoxical association: tourists are often in search of authenticity – this is why ICH can very often be the object of genuine touristic interest; however, it is precisely the presence of tourists that make a certain piece of heritage less authentic. Tourists become the very source of their own disappointment: another apparently inescapable paradox.

In Castelnuovo, most of the people involved in the local public ritual are longing for more official recognition; in Hlinsko, in spite of several discordant voices, the enlisting on the UNESCO ICH was met with enthusiasm precisely on the grounds of the potential incorporation of that sleepy region into the network of cultural tourism in Czechia. Furthermore, the appointment of a heritage label is associated with prestige and with the prospect of augmented visibility in the growing but also competitive market of tourism, and therefore with consequential economic advantage, in order to reinvigorate economies that are, especially in the rural, marginal, and 'provincial' (Noyes 2003) areas of Europe, often anaemic.

The coexistent, complementary and interconnected processes of heritagisation, commodification and touristification are related to an emic desire for external recognition, social prestige as well as pride and for the idea of 'local development', at times (in rural and peripheral contexts) motivated more by the necessity of economic survival than by a will for profit. This does not mean that heritagisation should always be considered as an instrumental strategy for self-marketability. Nor, however, can this be utterly excluded (Tauschek 2010), for several social agents, in neo-liberal Europe, also affirm the economic rationale of their actions in the sphere of all things cultural. Heritage is but one thread in the tightly woven fabric of the politics and the economics of culture in Europe today. Those are some of the reasons why certain events may want to become heritage.

Strictly connected with social representations of authenticity and with tourism is the process of ICH musealisation. In a sense, it is actually impossible to disentangle heritagisation from musealisation, for they are strictly interconnected and rely upon the same sensibility for the safeguarding, protection and transmission of what is considered not only authentic and aesthetically or socially valuable but also potentially 'endangered' and therefore in need of being preserved. Heritagisation could be considered a cultural variant of musealisation or vice versa. They are both practices of 'saving' as well as 'institutionalising' the past (Macdonald 2013: 138), detaching certain things or categories of things from their normal 'social life' and resulting sometimes in forms of cultural fetishisation, glorification of authenticity and historicity and even material 'sacralisation' (Macdonald 2013: 138).

Musealisation of folklore and ICH have escalated in Europe since the 1970s. It occurred in Castelnovo, Hlinsko and Solsona, where museums or exhibition sites devoted to masks, memorabilia, pictures and gadgets (often for sale) connected with the local ritual events were established, at different moments, during the last three decades. Castelnovo has (unsuccessfully) been trying to found a museum of the local carnival for fifteen years now; in the meantime, a permanent exhibition of carnival-related memorabilia and other objects is hosted at the local organisation's venue. Solsona has several sites (a tourist centre with a small exhibition gallery, the places where the masks and the giants are kept, and others) that serve as ethnographic galleries. Hlinsko saw the birth of a museum of the *Masopust* in conjunction with the UNESCO recognition. These sites and institutions have acquired a great importance and contribute today to the structuring, the reproduction, the circulation and the normativisation of narratives of typicity and locality, crystallising the local festive imaginaries but also instructing the locals as well as the outsiders to distinguish what is old and traditional, and therefore (in their view) authentic, and what is not.

But musealisation is also strongly connected with commodification, for at least two reasons. First, it very often depends on private or public funding (through sponsorships, subventions and subscriptions); second, the creation of a museum is also the creation of a space where cultural commerce can be regulated and legitimately undertaken. Through museums, galleries and the

like, the ‘material’ dimension of heritage emerges clearly, not only by means of financialisation and commodification proper (Bendix 2009: 263; Tauschek 2010) but also in the sense of making tangible what is (supposed to be) intangible: the ICH and the social practices and representations that it embodies and triggers ‘embed’ themselves in these objects; in this way, ICH ‘materialises’. However, this dynamic makes it clear that the material dimension alone cannot acquire, keep or transmit meaning without its ‘intangible’ counterpart, formed of the discourses, narratives and representations that make the tangible (whether a monument, a piece of art, artefact, picture, etc.) socially recognisable, relevant and desirable: the integrated or symbiotic nature of heritage (Nic Craith and Kockel 2015). The foundation of a museum or a similar institution is another reason why certain events may want to become heritage.

6.4 ... and identity, of course

If, on the one hand, representations of authenticity are widely at work in phenomena like commodification, touristification and musealisation, on the other, collective identity as a relational and structural social dimension encompasses, or rather implies, all of the previously mentioned aspects and processes. It is at the core of the design, functioning and reproduction of public rituals and/as ICH. No wonder that in an era dominated by the markets and other expressions of global capitalism, identity itself, that is, a specific, culturally oriented way of defining a group’s sense and modality of belonging, whether or not ritualised, can become touristified and commodified (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009).

Identity-related issues (especially identity construction and expression) in connection with ICH and heritagisation have been the object of a rich anthropological scholarship (abundant references can be found in Macdonald 2013 and Nic Craith 2008). It has actually been argued that the very process of ‘filing’ heritage (for example, in the form of an application for the UNESCO ICH or the registration on a national list) can be a powerful act of self- or external representation, triggering feelings of social belonging and therefore shaping a sense of community (Kuutma 2007). I have myself observed this process. In fact, in all of my ethnographic cases, the festivals and the performances embedded within them operate as platforms for identity construction, mostly enhancing feelings of local, regional and/or national belonging. However, tensions and even forms of cultural ‘dissidence’ (for example, in the form of openly criticising the heritagisation process or not participating in the public ritual) do subsist. It is important to stress this aspect here in order not to fall into the trap of an implicit and uncritical neo-functionalism. Identity is not a monolithic social configuration, nor are its processual dynamics linear and predictive. Besides, as I have tried to explain in the previous pages, the process through which European public rituals have become heritage is far from being unidirectional, homogeneous or free of ruptures and tensions.

Different worldviews, political positioning based on local frictions or ideological frameworks, as well as discrepancies in the vision of the past, or even open

rivalries between close communities or within the same community can emerge around the 'heritage discourse' and the process of festive heritagisation. In my three ethnographic cases, tensions were frequent especially between members of local NGOs and politicians (for example, for organisational issues), and dissidence open among heritage 'discontents' or 'sceptics'. In Castelnuovo, heated debates and intellectual disagreements have characterised the local construction of traditional meaning, leading to veritable 'conflicts of interpretation' about the local heritagised carnival pantomime (Testa 2017b). Contrapositions and dissidence lead to more or less structured modalities of open or implicit negotiations among social agents, as in the case of Solsona, for example, where the political establishment sitting in the local government – the ultimate authority concerning public order but also the object of overt mocking during the carnival – has had to come to terms with the carnival leaders and figure out viable ways of mutual tolerance. The aforementioned, and many other 'heritage problems', have been observed and analysed in the anthropological literature about ICH (Adell et al. 2015; Bendix 2009; Berliner 2012; Bortolotto 2011; Knecht and Niedermüller 2003; Kuutma 2007; Logan, Kochel and Nic Craith 2015). Likewise, minority views and practices should also be taken into consideration, for they always subsist and are, in one way or another, significant. True is that, in the end, a certain level of generalisation flattening down differences and nuances becomes inevitable: as all sciences, anthropology, too, rests on attempts of generalisation, in order to be able to handle the complexity of reality and 'reduce' it to models and patterns (map is not territory). And in fact, minority issues, minor inclinations, occasional dissidences or frictions, and exceptional examples should not overshadow the general trend, which regards heritagisation as a resource useful for a variety of purposes for a variety of social agents and institutions. This general trend, consisting of all the transformations and processes described in the previous sections, remains solidly anchored in patterns of communitarian and identitarian significance – locals are very often unbeknown functionalists.

To conclude with a few last reflections about the interplay of identity with other representational dimensions, I would like to stress once again how deeply influential the sense of 'typiqueness' and 'uniqueness' of the local festive heritage is in the construction of locality and of local identities. This conclusion can again be easily deduced from my own cases as well as from plenty of other examples in the anthropological literature. The symbolic interaction between ritual structure, festive behaviour, the tangible features of the festival (decorations and other paraphernalia, masks and figures, the equipment used during the performances, etc.) and the location can lead to an emergence of a rather new, and specific, 'sense of place', a veritable heritagised and heritagising *genius loci*, as has already been observed (Lähdesmäki 2016; Nic Craith and Kockel 2015), which is literally the soil in which identity can root and grow.

Regional and national identities, as well as the social construction of space and of the sense of locality (and of the fact of belonging to it), are not the only stakes, though. European identity is another one: 'the contemporary concepts of cultural heritage must be seen as symbolic constructions which territorialise

cultural differences and which play an important role in the symbolic formation of regions, nations, and supranational entities like the EU' (Knecht and Niedermüller 2003: 90). The sense of belonging to a locality and community and processes of emergence of European symbolic spaces and broader, transregional and transnational identities intersect with each other on many levels (Johler 2003; Lähdesmäki 2016), among others, in the field of festive heritagisation. This appearance of local(ised) variations of European identities is something I have also observed and recorded during my investigations: different social agents articulate their ethnic, political or more generically cultural identities also referring explicitly to Europe and to 'being Europeans'. Often, in spite of the emic claims of these festivals being 'unique', their being actually variations of a historical 'pan-European' type of public event (carnival) is more or less acknowledged and variably taken into account, leading to an equation between festive culture and belonging (having similar festivals throughout Europe = being part of the same 'culture'). This aspect of cultural recognition and folkloric narrative also plainly exemplifies the typically 'European' identity interplay between the local micro-level and the transregional and transnational macro-sphere (Delanty 1994; Macdonald 2013; Wilken 2012). It is in the cultural interstices of this dimension that variations of European identity acquire their actual collective configurations and emerge from within and in the light of the social fabric.

Last but not least, a local public ritual becoming heritage allows a 'reflexive' kind of identity construction: being collective identity a differential and relational social dimension (albeit ultimately rooted in individual psychology), it cannot but be grounded on an 'us ≠ them' logic (Delanty 1999): 'we' can only exist insofar as there is a 'you' or a 'they'. Therefore, external cultural feedback in the form of an official recognition (e.g. by UNESCO) or the presence and interest of visitors become symbolically relevant and mostly – though not always – socially desirable: in a way, institutions and tourists embody the best type of 'them' (also, as already stressed, for reasons of prestige and economic benefit). Therefore, even though a theoretically simplistic functionalism should be avoided when analysing and interpreting these phenomena, due to the fact that tensions within communities and groups might and actually do arise or are even triggered by the heritagisation process, the prevalent general function of heritagised public rituals in Europe should be considered as fundamentally prosocial – especially in times of crisis. This is yet another reason why certain events may want to become heritage.

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