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## Visualizing the intangible: conceptualizing audio-visual Media and the representation of Intangible Heritage

Shina Erlewein

*International Graduate School*

shinaerlewein@yahoo.de

*Heritage Studies at Cottbus University, Germany*

erlewshi@tu-cottbus.de

Since UNESCO's 2003 convention and the inauguration of the Representative *List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* in 2008, a number of projects have utilized digital technologies for the preservation and promotion of heritage. However, no comprehensive media strategies for the representation of Intangible Heritage have been developed to date and globally circulated audio-visual representations still largely adhere to conventional styles of documentary cinema. Referring to a variety of media conceptualizations, as they have developed within Social/Cultural Anthropology, this paper aims to show that in the context of heritage mediation it is necessary to consider the strategies and tools in use while representing cultural practices and constituting knowledge through audio-visual means. Considering the postmodern reflection on the authorship of knowledge and reflecting postcolonial criticism regarding a Western predominance within representation practices, the paper proposes a theoretical framework for the integration of local communities in the representation of "their" heritage. Hereby, subject-generated and participatory media are considered significant tools through which objectification and a reaffirmation of difference can be prevented. Instead, access, participation and reciprocity within knowledge production and dissemination are considered sustainable concepts for the mediation of ICH. They enable a (re)shaping of meaning, the maintenance and strengthening of agency and identity bonds, and thus safeguarding regarding ICH.

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### Introduction

Audio-visual media are powerful tools for the construction and representation of social reality in a globalized world with an ever-increasing number of people accessing audio-visual representations to collect information. Since the proclamation of masterpieces in 2001, UNESCO's 2003 convention and the inauguration of the *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* in 2008, a number of projects have utilized digital technologies for the preservation and promotion of heritage. However, no comprehensive media strategies for the representation of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) have been developed to date. Authorized and globally circulated audio-visual representations still largely adhere to conventional styles of documentary cinema. Herein, aesthetically refined visual material is arranged to illustrate a verbally transmitted argument and an invisible, omnipotent narrator speaks, while the concerned subjects often remain voiceless and unidentified. Further, the media tend to reproduce Western standards of value-making and hierarchies regarding representation and interpretation.

This paper argues that the audio-visual representation of ICH needs to be rethought in the course of a postmodern reflection on the authorship of knowledge (Clifford and Marcus, 1986) and in view of postcolonial criticism regarding Western-dominated regimes of representation (Hall, 1997). In the context of heritage mediation, it is necessary to consider the strategies and tools in use while representing cultural practices and constituting knowledge through audio-visual means. Furthermore, in view of ICH being a living heritage, it is necessary to differentiate between representation as 'speaking of' and representation

as 'speaking for' (Spivak, 1988). Epistemological and ethical issues regarding the responsibility and the right to speak for, about, with or alongside others need to be considered (Ruby, 2000).

In searching for sustainable strategies for the mediation of ICH, the paper proceeds as follows. The first part identifies the constructivist perspective on heritage, identity and media, before the second part discusses the concepts of ICH and safeguarding as defined in the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (ICH). The following parts attend to different conceptualizations and usages of audio-visual media, as they have developed within Social/Cultural Anthropology, and the final part expresses recommendations for the audio-visual representation of ICH.

### Heritage as process

Heritage is knowledge, a cultural product and a political resource at the same time. From a constructivist perspective, heritage can be seen as a way through which selected past traditions, practices, expressions and material artefacts become cultural, social, political and economic resources for the present. The demands of the present and even of an imagined future select, shape, create and manage content, form of representation and interpretation of heritage resources (Ashworth et al., 2007). Therefore, heritage can be described as present-centered and time-specific, whereby its meaning is altered, reread and reconstructed in new contexts.

Moreover, it is important to consider heritages and identities as plurals. In particular, ICH functions in multiple ways and involves many producers, actors and stakeholders who all have various objectives in the creation, management and promotion of heritage (Ashworth and Graham, 2005). Heritage is a socio-cultural product, constructed and produced by institutions, interactions and actors. These productive efforts are based on processes of meaning-making. Therefore, heritages are strongly about the meanings and representations that are constructed for them (Graham et al., 2000; Graham, 2002). Meanings give value and are produced and exchanged through social interaction via multiple media. They are marked out by identity and created through consumption and interpretation (Graham and Howard, 2008). As such, they are constantly revised and subject to change.

This dynamic has made heritage one of the most useful tools in the process of constructing and representing identity. Identity is also never fixed; rather, it is dynamic and responsive. Hall (2006, [orig. 1990]) stresses the point that identity is ever changing, in process and always constituted within, not outside, representation. While identities are mediated through the signifying practices of film, video and television, these audio-visual practices are shaped by the political economies of the dominant cultures. Nonetheless, local/disenfranchised/minority producers can negotiate and participate in the process of constructing identities. Hall (1997) argues that audio-visual media help individual and collective social agents to make identity claims. He stresses the importance of a social agent's control over the means of representation to create power and meaning.

Audio-visual representations of ICH participate in anchoring memory and legitimizing versions of heritage and identity. These versions imply inclusion and exclusion, remembering and forgetting. They make sense of the world and position subjectivities within the world. However, at any given time, several rivaling and contesting representations may exist and coproduce each other. They are manufactured from either outside or within a socio-cultural group or in collaboration between members of both groups.

Moreover, audio-visual representation involves media and practices through which meanings are produced, constructed and circulated among social groups. These meanings are to a certain extent shared meanings and they are constitutive of culture. Therefore, audio-visual representations, as constitutive practices, are never innocent, neutral or objective. It is important to reflect that these representations do not merely present reality but rather produce and (re)shape reality. They produce knowledge and exercise power. As Hall (2006, p. 436) argues: "every regime of representation is a regime of power formed, as Foucault reminds us, by the fatal couplet, 'power/knowledge'".

### Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

Intangible Cultural Heritage is defined as "the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage" (UNESCO, 2003, Article 2(1)). ICH manifests itself in five domains: oral traditions and expressions, including language; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and traditional craftsmanship (ibid, Article 2(2)). The 2003 convention abstains from describing ICH as a masterpiece bearing outstanding universal value and instead recognizes communities, groups and individuals as major reference points. Indeed, it is their recognition that is crucial for the identification of ICH. Furthermore, ICH is identified as a living heritage. While being "transmitted from generation to generation", it is "constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history" (ibid, Article 2(1)). Here, the centrality of the communities and groups is illustrated again. Moreover, ICH is described as sensitive and responsive to contextual change, as flexible, dynamic and constantly changing. Simultaneously, ICH is described as cohesive, forming a constituent part of the cultural identity of a particular social group, whereby it "provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity" (ibid).

Hence, ICH can also be understood as traditional and yet contemporary, as inclusive, representative and community-based (UNESCO, 2009a).

The prime concern of the convention is the safeguarding of ICH. Safeguarding measures encompass, yet are not restricted to, documentation, preservation and protection; instead, they go far beyond these concepts and aim at enabling viability (UNESCO, 2003, Article 2(3)). Safeguarding departs from notions of conservation and preservation, which might lead to a "fixed or frozen" heritage and rather aims to encourage the continuous development and transmission of ICH, of "knowledge, skills and meaning" (UNESCO, 2009b, p. 3). Crucial importance is not given to products or "concrete manifestations, such as dance performances, songs, music instruments or crafts", but rather to "processes involved in transmitting, or communicating it from generation to generation" (ibid). Again, the communities, groups and individuals must be considered as the nodal point, whereby "outsiders can help" (ibid) only alongside them. They can collect and record information, mediate knowledge about ICH through major institutions like schools and universities, as well as through media. Nevertheless, customary practices regarding access to knowledge within the respective communities need to be considered.

It is clearly stated by UNESCO that "any safeguarding measure must be developed, and applied, with the consent and involvement of the community itself" (ibid). Article 15 of the ICHC mandates that in the course of any safeguarding activity, the "widest possible participation of communities (...) that create, maintain and transmit such heritage" shall be guaranteed (UNESCO, 2003, Article 15). Local communities shall be encouraged to have a sense of ownership of their respective heritage, reaffirming their identity and value as a community. In fact, States Parties are bound to engage in a collaborative approach, accommodating local concerns regarding the safeguarding of ICH.

Indeed, as ICH manifests itself and is continuously re-created in the socio-cultural realities of the communities, groups and individuals concerned, safeguarding measures will interfere and leave a direct impact upon their respective contemporary realities. As such, the requirement of community participation points into the right direction and should find adequate application, including within practices of representation.

### **The audio-visual representation of culture**

With regard to the approaches towards representation and documentation of culture, we can learn from the discourses and major shifts in the conceptualization and usage of audio-visual media in Social/Cultural Anthropology and especially its sub-discipline of Visual Anthropology. The diverse conceptualizations are outlined in some detail below.

### **The salvage paradigm**

Ethnographic film started as a "phenomenon of colonialism" (de Brigard, 2003, p. 15). In its beginnings, it can be described as a major project that was trying to document with visual and later audio-visual means "disappearing cultures" – cultures of the "others", the small-scale, kinship-based and non-western societies, societies that were the primary objects of anthropology in its beginning stage. Félix-Louis Regnault produced the first ethnographic film already in 1895, at the same time that the first cinematic film was screened openly by the Lumière brothers using a cinematograph. At the colonial exhibition, *Exposition Ethnographique de l'Afrique Occidentale* in Paris, he recorded inter alia a Wolof woman doing pottery (Böhl, 1985). Alfred Court Haddon and his British multi-disciplinary expedition to the Torres Straits Islands in 1898 was the first documented anthropological project using film in the field (de Brigard, 2003). One of Haddon's main objectives was ethnographic salvage and his main interest was in material culture. A few minutes of film material have survived, which show inter alia three men performing a mask-dance. Baldwin Spencer and Frank Gillen also used visual devices in their work with Australian Aboriginals at the turn of the century, with one hour of film produced showing the Aranda engaged in ceremonial acts. The works of Haddon, Spencer and Gillen were pioneering and had a considerable effect on visual methods in Social/Cultural Anthropology.

Film seemed to permit direct observation and was used as a scientific tool and method of research, as well as to present findings, e.g. in multimedia lectures (Griffiths, 2002; Grimshaw, 2001). The general expectation towards film was the possibility of recording reliable neutral evidence concerning other cultures, which could be investigated and comparatively analyzed, or at least, serving the salvage paradigm, function as reliable, detailed and exact documents of (mainly material) culture. In Renault's words, film "preserves forever all human behaviors for the needs of our studies" (Regnault, 1931, p. 306 cited in de Brigard, 2003, p. 15). His understanding of the usage of film anticipated a belief in the objectivity of the filmic material, reflecting a positivist approach wherein filmic records could be collected, compared, analyzed, measured, classified and categorized. In Renault's words: "Only cinema provides objective documents in abundance; thanks to cinema, the anthropologist can, today, collect the life of all peoples; he will possess in his drawers all the special acts of different races" (Regnault, 1923, pp. 680-681, also cited in Ruby, 2000, p. 44). Regnault further requested the establishment of film archives. In 1900, the *International Ethnographic Congress* in Paris acknowledged the usage of film for documentation purposes and expressed that museums could include film archives to facilitate an understanding of the usage of artefacts displayed.

At the very beginnings of an ethnographic filmic tradition, the observer and the observed were thus differentiated from each other through a strong demarcation line, the technological instrument camera, whereby the "civilized" could study the "racial other", the "primitive". The positivist approach to science in the 19<sup>th</sup> century aimed at the collection of "life", which could then be scrutinized and classified according to the evolutionary model and colonial needs. However, when the evolutionary paradigm in anthropology developed into a realist paradigm and Anthropology established itself as a scientific discipline, the use of visual technologies was marginalized. Anthropology became a "science of words" (Mead, 2003, p. 5).

Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson's usage of film was an exception. Mead acknowledged film as being predestined for systematic research, especially in the context of ethnographic salvage. In *Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words* (Mead, 2003, [orig. 1974]), she refers to the anthropologist's "responsibility" for "making and preserving records of the vanishing customs and human beings" (p. 3). Acknowledging "the limitations of language in conveying or translating aspects of social life" (Grimshaw, 2001, p. 88), she points to the fact that dance, song, language as well as transactional relations in particular can be preserved and analyzed well through audio-visual footage (Mead, 2003, p. 5). These records would further be useful for the revitalization of cultural heritage and the preservation of cultures and behaviors. In her words: "(Be)cause these are disappearing types of behavior, we need to preserve them in forms that not only will permit the descendants to repossess their cultural heritage (and, indeed, will permit present generations to incorporate it into their emerging styles), but that will also give our understanding of human history and human potentialities a reliable, reproducible and re-analyzable corpus" (ibid, pp. 8-9). According to Mead, human forms of behavior are disappearing while scientists are sent into the field with "a hopelessly inadequate note-taking of an earlier age" (ibid, p. 4).

Mead understood films as "objective materials" that allowed for a purely technical illustration of reality that will be available for analysis and reanalysis even in the light of changing theoretical paradigms and objectives. She called for "long sequences from one point of view", "unedited stretches of instrumental observation", "prosaic, controlled, systematic filming" and predicated that a "finer recording of these precious materials can illuminate our growing knowledge and appreciation of mankind" (ibid, p. 10). For the preservation of "observations in as complete a form as possible", Mead (2004, p. 47, [orig. 1973]) even recommended using an un-manned and continuously running 360-degree camera. Mead and Bateson transcended the usage of images for illustration purposes of already developed arguments towards a conceptualization of images as data and records and therewith to primary sources for the study of social interaction and for elements in – instead of simply illustrating – an argument (Grimshaw, 2001; Sullivan, 2007). Following a realist paradigm, they thought to film an un-manipulated and uninterrupted pre-filmic reality.

However, it can be argued that instead of representing a pre-filmic authentic reality in its completeness, this approach is very close to surveillance (Foucault, 1977) and fosters the production of highly artificial filmic artefacts, dehumanizing and objectifying in its effects, which remain at a distance from people's lived experience, socio-cultural contexts and cultural significance. Thus, this approach is highly criticized and seems outdated today (Banks, 2001). Instead, knowledge production is understood to be generated essentially through a form of interaction involving a relationship between the informant and researcher, rather than through an intellectual output of the researcher gained through objective observation of the informant.

### Observation without control

In the early-1950s, the positivist paradigm in filmic representation was challenged by innovations in audio-visual technologies and practices. Grimshaw (2001) relates these developments to an increased political awareness, especially in France and the US, where intense political struggles took place regarding colonial independence and civil rights. The documentary project changed its approaches, with the notion of observation now at its center. Two schools developed: direct cinema, established by the Drew associates in the US; and *cinéma vérité*, developed by the French anthropologist and filmmaker Jean Rouch.

*Cinéma vérité* was committed towards an unfolding and undirected process of filmmaking, within which scripts were not allowed; rather, films evolved spontaneously and in an improvised manner. The camera was meant to bathe in a fluid and evolving reality. It was freed from the constraints of the tripod and was allowed to be mobile, alive, flexible and embodied. The filmmaker and camera were acknowledged as participating in the event of the film, creating realities in the plural rather than discovering and recording a fixed reality. Films had a highly reflexive stance; they did not intend to record objective ethnographic reality, but rather aimed to break with objective and objectifying endeavors and attend to the complex and diverse subjectivities of the people, acknowledging that ethnographic realities are produced in an encounter. Moreover, the audience was not patronized; instead, they were considered to actively participate in the creation of meaning.

At the same time in the US, Robert Drew and his colleagues developed direct cinema. Here, no direction, stimulation or interaction with the film subjects was allowed. Small film crews of around two people spontaneously recorded reality with synchronous sound, as it unfolded before the camera. Tripods, lights, scripts, staging and repetition were forbidden. The filmmakers and the camera were free to move to catch what was happening around them. Accordingly, they first had to learn to see and immerse themselves in the situations unfolding in front of them, conceptualizing themselves as a sort of eyewitness

of the actions. Furthermore, they rejected montage and favored the *mise-en-scène*. They did not conceptualize themselves as partaking in the creation of a (filmic) reality, but considered themselves to investigate the world through intense observation practices. In order to generate significance and meaning, the audience was expected to engage with the shown material and immerse in the event through the reception of the film. Nonetheless, the material of the film was still conceptualized as evidence.

In an ethnographic context, this methodology was termed as observational cinema (Young, 2003, [orig. 1975]). Its approach radically differed from the realist paradigm, in which the camera was considered to record data or illustrate arguments. Instead, the camera became deeply involved with the subjectivities of people and an all-knowing expert summary or narration is replaced with a variety of voices speaking in diverse ways and contexts. Leaving their privileged positions, filmmakers attempted to be open and receptive towards the world. The method was observation, an approach that was considered to foster respect and carried an ethical stance (Grimshaw and Ravetz, 2009).

Despite initially being celebrated as a major breakthrough in ethnographic filmmaking, observational cinema quickly encountered serious criticism. MacDougall (1995, p. 118, [orig. 1975]) argued that the "orthodoxy" of the observatory approach involves a "self-denying tendency". Furthermore, the camera is not participatory but seems to be not there, an unseen presence able to deliver evidence through its ability to adopt countless perspectives and positions. Hereby, the process of production, of filmmaking and meaning-making is mainly neglected. The camera wants to film things as if they would have happened anyway, to film people in an undisturbed interaction, in an approach that seems to legitimize the "voyeur's peephole" or the surveillance camera (ibid, p. 120). The filmmaker is conceptualized as omnipotent, invisible and all knowing, able to grasp an event in its totality and provide evidence of it, using the camera as a "secret weapon in the pursuit of knowledge" (ibid). MacDougall (ibid) argues that this "lonely approach", within which the filmmaker has to neglect his/her presence, makes the audience an accomplice in a reinvention of the colonial legacy of separating the self and the other based upon rigid lines. He states: "The traditions of science and narrative art combine in this instance to dehumanize the study of man. It is a form in which the observer and the observed exist in separate worlds, and it produces films that are monologues" (MacDougall, 1995, pp. 124-125). Film subjects are denied access to the film and the filmmaker. The production crew and the audience conceive of themselves as being separate from the seen, unable to interact and communicate. Thus, the screen serves as a demarcation line and a protective shield. While immediate emotional reactions might arise, the audience remains in the secure locus of absolute separation.

### **Participatory Media**

For David MacDougall, "participatory cinema" lies "beyond observational cinema", since it acknowledges the event of production and allows for an encounter between subjects and filmmaker. It is acknowledged that the camera "is held by a representative of one culture encountering another" (ibid, p. 125). As such, the produced media is never "merely a record of another society: it is always the record of a meeting between a filmmaker and that society" (ibid). Participatory cinema not only gives credit to negotiation processes between filmmakers and subjects in the construction of the film, but also conceptualizes the audience as actively participating in the construction of meaning (Grimshaw and Papastergiadis, 1995). Participatory cinema attempts to balance fundamental inequalities between the observer and the observed. It acknowledges the presence of the filmmaker as being fundamentally involved in the process of meaning-making and gives space for culture being "imprint(ed) directly upon the film" by the subjects themselves (MacDougall, 1995, p. 125). Through revealing his/her position, the filmmaker constructs the audio-visual material as evidence. Film-elicitation, direct requests and interventions are considered further tools for gathering deeper data, while collaboration and joint authorship are also mentioned as promising and necessary strategies. Ruby (2000) even argues that only reflexive, collaborative ethnographic films that also give voice to the informants could be called ethically correct visual representations.

Within participatory cinema, (audio-visual) ethnographic knowledge production is now conceptualized as an exchange, as a process and a dialogue involving two sides, rather than a process of simple data collection followed up by scientific assessment, interpretation and evaluation from one side. Here, the pre-filmic reality is not in focus for mediation; nevertheless, the accumulation of information "about them" is positioned as an aim and therewith corresponds with the aim raised in observational cinema, as well as realistic approaches in scientific cinema. It can be argued that the "entering actively into the world of his subjects" (MacDougall, 1995, p. 125) can be better described as actively entering into a co-produced process of meaning-making of a world, which differs from "their world" through being a shared world.

We can summarize that ethnographic film departed from the objective and objectifying endeavor in anthropology and became increasingly subjective and reflexive until the 1980s and 1990s. In terms of approach, it developed from a realistic paradigm to an observational cinema and subsequently to a participatory cinema (Grimshaw, 2001; Loizos, 1993).

### Self-representations

A further step was taken during the 1980s and early-1990s when former film subjects (indigenous/minority/disenfranchised) started to "shoot back", producing and constructing their own audio-visual media. In a move that resembled the postcolonial strategy of "writing back" against colonial master-narratives, they challenged the colonial gaze and existing power relations in the representation of their own culture. Issues of power, control over production, distribution and content as well as social implications of media were discussed. This subject-generated cinema relates to the conscious self-production of audio-visual representations by members of the represented community using an insider's point of view. Subject-generated media is used as a form of social practice, a self-conscious positioning within the politics of representation, a positioning that at the same time creates and represents contemporary subjectivities. It may also encompass indigenous media, which initially was often closely linked to notions such as cultural regeneration, documentation of specific cultural practices, as well as the reconstruction and reassertion of identity (Prins, 2002).

Indigenous media, like ethnographic film, mediates across cultural boundaries. Nevertheless, indigenous media, to which subject-generated media can also be added, is more concerned with "heal(ing) disruptions in cultural knowledge, in historical memory, and in identity between generations" (Ginsburg, 2002, p. 216). It provides a social, cultural and political tool for (re)constructing cultural identities. Furthermore, it enables influence and agency. On the other hand, ethnographic film is more concerned with mediation, creating understanding between two different groups. Nonetheless, both approaches are shaping the "processes of identity construction" within and outside the community; they "are not based on some retrieval of an idealized past but create and assert a position for the present" (ibid, p. 217).

The Faustian dilemma and the global village can be identified as the major paradigms used regarding the positioning of these new media activities. The Faustian contract is linked back to the Frankfurt school, which identifies traditional culture as authentic and inherently good, and considers this culture to be threatened and irreversibly polluted or destroyed by contact with mass media, mass culture and high technology. As Ginsburg (2002, p. 213) stresses, this position tends to freeze both kinds of societies "into paradigmatic positions that essentialize features that distinguish them". On the other hand, societies are defined in the global village paradigm as "constantly changing rather than determined by state, economic, and technological imperatives". In this paradigm, social agency and an optimistic conception of these media is promoted as a connecting tool, linking different cultures all over the world with each other, therewith creating a sense of community that resembles a local community within a village. However, the approach of "electronic democracy" also has shortcomings, given that it does not pay adequate tribute to different power relations and experiences (ibid). Ginsburg criticizes both paradigms for promoting static essentialism and cultural and political myopia, respectively, and calls for a bricolage, for new media forms as "a means of cultural invention that refracts and recombines elements from both the dominant and the minority societies" (ibid, p. 230). She stresses that the long proclaimed indigenous "other" shall not be maintained as being positioned within a dichotomic order that recreates and rearticulates the discourse of the "other", but should be included in analysis as a diverse yet shared representational practice on an equal standing. She argues for "incorporating ethnographic film and indigenous media within the same analytical frame" (ibid, p. 216). Using the metaphor of a "parallax effect" - parallax refers here to the Greek parallax, which denotes change and alternation - she states that indigenous media has an "epistemologically positive impact" (Ginsburg, 1995, p. 65). Developed in astronomy, the parallax effect describes "the phenomenon that occurs when a change in the position of the observer creates the illusion that an object has been displaced or moved; this effect is harnessed to gain a greater understanding" (ibid). For Ginsburg, the cinematic representation of culture appears different when seen from the perspective of indigenous media and ethnographic film, respectively, and a juxtaposition or combination of these different perspectives will allow for a better understanding of the complex phenomenon that we call culture. This argument can be extended to cover subject-generated cinema in general.

### Concluding remarks

Taking into account the characteristics of ICH, as well as the requirements that have been outlined for its safeguarding and considering the aforementioned methodological approaches to audio-visual representation, the following points can be noted.

First, since ICH manifests itself through the recognition of communities, groups and individuals, with clear reference given to identity and continuity within these communities, their interpretations are highly significant and should remain constitutive of practices. As audio-visual representations do not provide neutral reflections of reality, but rather encroach upon reality - they legitimize versions of heritage, assign inclusion and exclusion, remembering and forgetting - community participation within representation practices should be encouraged. In the light of meaning being constructed and (re)created within representation, subject-generated cinema and participatory cinema seem significant circuits through which meaning can be shaped regarding ICH. Moreover, control over means of representation will enable social agents to make identity claims, which in turn will strengthen their involvement with ICH practices. Furthermore, the 2003 convention asserts that safeguarding measures need to be developed and applied

together with the respective communities. Thus, collaborative approaches within cinematic representation seem adequate.

Second, if we acknowledge that ICH is a living heritage that is constantly in a state of becoming and that meanings are not fixed but rather evolving and contested, the filmic (re)construction of 'authentic tradition' seems misleading. Representational strategies need to take into account that ICH is situated in time and space, and thus approaches that freeze, standardize and musealize living cultural traditions should be avoided. Instead, audio-visual representations should strive to examine the different layers of history, as well as the manifold realities of contemporary practice and experience. In doing so, contemporary practitioners would also receive recognition and promotion.

Third, as audio-visual representations of ICH are not windows into the world but are constructed in an encounter, the camera should not mark a demarcation line between cultures but rather a possibility for dialogue and exchange. Indeed, multiple agents have various objectives in the creation, management and promotion of heritage. Thus, to avoid disempowering bearers and custodians of ICH, triple access is needed: access to production processes, to the visual text itself, as well as to reception processes. The provision of access in an intercultural setting will contrast objectification and prevent a reframing and reaffirmation of difference; instead, it will promote diversity and enable reciprocity within knowledge production and dissemination. Finally, a combination of different perspectives of vision will allow for a better understanding of the complex phenomenon that we call ICH.

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