

Diffraction Intangible Cultural Heritage (Ich) Education: Synthetic Folklore as an Alternative Pedagogy

Ning Chen

University of Cambridge, The United Kingdom

Abstract

This research reimagines folk art as the pulsating core of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), a multidimensional confluence of ancestral echoes and speculative futures, where it is understood as a living, rhizomatic network—an assemblage in which cultural intelligence unfurls from the Gesamtkunstwerk of Romanticism to the fragmented, pluralistic aesthetics of postmodernity. In this vision, future ICH inheritors emerge as myth-weaving poets and intergalactic travelers, whose inherited crafts fuse legacy with radical foresight. Departing from linear, human-centered paradigms of authenticity, the work embraces a "synthetic folklore" pedagogy, utilizing AI technologies to reconceptualize ICH's relational and spatial contexts. Reinterpreting Deleuze and Guattari's three ontogenetic syntheses of "desiring-production," the study identifies three key syntheses: ① parodic collisions symbolizing a "fourth state of matter," ② atlas mappings that juxtapose cultural anomalies, and ③ immersive, formless encounters with ICH materials and spaces. To embody these principles, three innovative ed-tech tools are proposed: ① *Atlas of ICH* for 3D mapping of evolving ICH territories; ② *Polytale*, which generates non-linear, multimodal ICH hybrids; and ③ *Cynocephalia*, an immersive platform for crafting personalized mythologies in educational spaces. A speculative syllabus, "Sowa Rigpa: A Synthetic Folklore of Body–Mind–Environment," unfolds as a blueprint for ICH's fluid materiality, where phytospheric alliances and cultural synesthesia weave together ethnobotany, sensory landscapes, and digital innovation. Advancing a transgressive manifesto for a borderless, pluralistic folk art, this research envisions a cosmic entanglement that disrupts entrenched ICH narratives, celebrating the vibrant, improvisational flux of its posthuman creativities.

Keywords: AI algorithms; Cultural Synesthesia; Ed-Tech Apparatus; Pluralized Creativities; Posthuman Transdisciplinarity