in dialogue or captured by the camera: children’s school problems, comparisons between camels and tractors, cars entering the herders’ camps from time to time, and a Turkish song played on a mobile phone. This allows us to better understand the hidden mechanism of the modernization processes touching the traditional societies. They consist not only of forcible changes, but also of the irresistible charm of an allegedly better life. They enter the herders’ reality as a longing or dream. A very interesting side of the film is its subtle portrait of emotions and thoughts. While the nomads were often presented as wild and arrogant, especially from the point of view of Turkey’s urban dwellers, the films portrays them as sensitive and thoughtful people who have not lost a spontaneous contact with nature, animals and themselves. Although the slow pace of the film might seem annoying to some modern viewers, its contemplative form manages to present the heart of the nomad’s life and its modern challenges.

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The Day of the Rams in Gljev can be fully understood only from a holistic viewpoint and by an in-depth study of the activities of its film-makers, Italian anthropologists and ethnographic museum curators like Giovanni Kezich, Antonella Mott and Cesare Poppi. In fact, this documentary constitutes one among the 36 documentaries and several other pieces of fieldwork footage realized in a cross-European project and network funded by the Culture Department of the European Union, called Carnival King of Europe. The essential aim of the research project is to endorse a new anthropological and cultural-historical perspective on carnivals and winter fertility rituals ‘as a discrete European cultural phenomenon’ (www.carnivalkingofeurope.it). By using a comparative methodology, the scholars involved in the project explore the common cultural roots of these rituals and empirically demonstrate what has already been analysed by Sir James Frazer, particularly the connection of the diffusion of carnival with the development of a new agrarian ideology in the classical world that contemplated the ritualization of the agricultural procedures in the hands of priestly sects (Salii, Arvales etc.). While in the cities carnival has, from the Middle Ages, gradually abandoned its connection with the promotion of crop fertility, in the rural settlements carnival is ‘very reminiscent of the ancient practice’ (www.carnivalkingofeurope.it). According to the members of Carnival King of Europe, carnival is thus an important feature of European cultural identity that must be preserved as cultural heritage in museum and ethnographic contexts.

The fieldwork documentaries filmed for the project form the bulk of the data for the comparative analysis, and also bear witness to a cultural performance that could
run the risk of being dismissed in contemporary, industrial times, in a heritage and museum perspective. On the one hand, every phase of the rituals are analytically depicted in order to ease the finding of common patterns among different carnivals scattered around Europe. On the other hand, each documentary must inform the audience about the specific ritual functions of that particular geographically bounded carnival. *The Day of the Rams in Gljev* thereby incarnates a hybrid media, half ethnographic film, half anthropological essay. Each filmic sequence is introduced by a written commentary.

Gljev is a Dalmatian settlement close to the border with Bosnia. For one day, agricultural and other activities are interrupted by the invasion of the didi (grandfathers), masks characterized by a tall, white, conical fur hat and by several bells sewn to their brilliant costumes. *The Day of the Rams in Gljev* is, thus, dominated by the sound of bells, which is supposed to recreate ‘the excitement of the old days of transhumance when the returning flocks would bring wealth and prosperity to the whole village’. Not only do the bells ring to announce the passage from winter to spring and the subsequent remunerative time for the farmers, but they peal to celebrate social consolidation through marriage. As a matter of fact, the masked progress from estate to estate, from house to house, disseminated from Gljev to the twin village of Gala, is apparently conducted in order to find a groom for the *Bula*, ‘a mannish, portly, mock-pregnant bride’. As in a real wedding procession, the other principal characters of the pilgrimage are an Orthodox priest, a couple of old cattle herders and shepherds, and the so-called Haram Pasha, reminiscent of the Ottoman domination, who co-ordinates the parade. Each stop heralds a convivial moment, when food and drink are exchanged between the household members and the masked mummers, and legends and stories sung, sometimes by referring to a book, sometimes by heart by the traditional storytellers or *guslars*.

The audience of both the documentary and the parade can behold several mockeries, of which I have chosen two to focus on for this review. On the one hand, the old couple of farmers emulate intercourse by means of vulgar gestures and the use of a long trunk as a penis. The Old Woman can be seen in other sexual activities with some characters of the masquerade. On the other hand, mock-doctors and mock-nurses comically bring their patients back to life by using incorrect and eccentric procedures. If we return to carnival literature, everything acquires new meaning:

Degradation and debasement of the higher do not have a formal and relative character in grotesque realism. “Upward” and “downward” have here an absolute and strictly topographical meaning. “downward” is earth, “upward” is heaven. Earth is an element that devours, swallows up (the grave, the womb) and at the same time an element of birth, of renascence (the maternal breasts). [...] degradation here means coming down to earth,
the contact with earth as an element that swallows up and gives birth at the same time.

(Bakhtin 1984:21)

The old must reinforce and be replaced by the new. The embarrassing sexual activities of the Old Woman prepare the ground for the Bula’s reproductive power, where giving birth, symbolically represented by the final ceremony of the Bula’s wedding, is advocated by the priestly characters and sanctions the end of the ritual. Immediately before the discovery of the Bula’s fit husband, the didi attack the young girls among the audience, in order to stress their fecundity. Parallel to female fertility, is that of the crops, which is reinforced by burning the old grass.

Everybody has reached their goal and can now enjoy the syncopated and turbulent dance of the didi, through which these small, rural communities feel part of a broader community beyond the local hamlets, in my opinion symbolically represented by the Croatian flag used to collect the scarves, ‘token of betrothal to the Bula’.

References
www.carnivalkingofeurope.it

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*Mouthwash* by Reman Sadani is a short movie exposing the poignant feeling of helplessness and sorrow experienced by an Iraqi migrant living in a UK city when receiving news of her Iraqi family being threatened by ISIS militia invading Mosul in June and July 2014.

The viewer is confronted with two contrasting realities that create the dramatic suspense of the film. On one hand, we see a woman’s daily life and preoccupations: her flat, daughters, housework, school concert, streets of the town (supposedly York). On the other hand, we hear her speaking by phone with relatives facing the ISIS occupation in Mosul. Along with the protagonist, we are confronted with the Iraqi family’s fear and worries, and their discontent with the changes imposed by the fundamentalist militia. Thus, the peaceful everyday reality becomes suffused with anxiety and the depressing assumption that ‘there is nothing I can do beside listening to them.’ This helplessness is strengthened by takes that zoom in on the very unremarkable elements of the surrounding reality: a spider on the wall, details of a texture or mouthwash. Its aim is to portray the state of mind of the protagonist, who tries to flee from worries and haunting images; as if the anxiety could be conquered by staring at something banal and normal. These images are accompanied by some