

Monuments of Devalued Immortality

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ABSTRACT One of the changes that Zygmunt Bauman observes in the processes of liquid modernity is the increasing favoritism of immediacy and transience, while permanence transforms from an advantage into a limitation. In such circumstances, a kind of cultural upheaval is indicated, conditioned by the "devaluation of immortality." However, parallelly to Bauman's process of devaluation of immortality, an accelerating inflation of cultural heritage has been taking place in the world since the 1960s. The article explores the possible causes of this inflation, as well as the ways of establishing a new relationship to the material reality of cultural heritage, based on care and repair as part of a broader responsibility toward cultural ecology. Through analysis, the inflation of heritage is linked to the changed perception of historicity in the last decade of the 20th century, which points to the concept of hyperreality as described by Jean Baudrillard. The question of the meaning of matter, which is at the heart of every material cultural artifact, and its newly established relationship to changed social reality, is the subject of discussion in this article. Considering the aspects of such meaning ranging between the authenticity of matter and its resource properties, the discussion leads to a conclusion outlining the limitations in understanding material cultural heritage through the prism of modern rationality, and therefore suggests the expansion of the framework of its perception, using hybrid concepts of cultural ecology by architect Thomas Will and quasi-objects by anthropologist and sociologist Bruno Latour.

Key words: modernity, heritage, authenticity, conservation, repair.

Those who are subjectless, those who are culturally deprived of their heritage are the true inheritors of culture.

Theodor W. Adorno

Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman published his study of *liquid modernity*, a term that according to him denotes a new phase of modern society, based on speed, flexibility and individualization. One of the changes that Bauman observes in these processes is the increasing favoritism of immediacy and transience, while permanence transforms from an advantage into a limitation.

“Once the infinity of possibilities empties the infinity of time of its seductive power, durability loses its attraction and turns from an asset into a liability. (...) The devaluation of immortality cannot but augur a cultural upheaval, arguably the most decisive turning point in human cultural history. (...) Indeed, throughout human history the work of culture consisted in sifting and sedimenting hard kernels of perpetuity out of transient human lives and fleeting human actions, in conjuring up duration out of transience, continuity out of discontinuity, and in transcending thereby the limits imposed by human mortality by deploying mortal men and women in the service of the immortal human species. Demand for this kind of work is nowadays shrinking.”¹

Despite that, parallelly with the devaluation of the immortality process, an accelerating inflation of cultural heritage has been taking place in the world since the 1960s. With new archeological discoveries and development of the concept of remembrance, the time interval encompassing the notion of heritage has significantly extended. Besides the time span of preservation, also the typology of artefacts that are preserved has been enlarged, therefore expanding the field of material cultural heritage also to industrial buildings and landscapes. Architect Rem Koolhaas conducted a quantitative analysis of the material cultural heritage fundus concluding the following: “... we started looking at the interval or the distance between the present and what was preserved. In 1818, that was 2,000 years. In 1900, it was only 200 years. And now, near the 1960s, it became twenty years. We are living in an incredibly exciting and slightly absurd moment, namely that preservation is overtaking us. Maybe we can be the first

¹ Bauman, 2000:124. “Twenty years ago Michael Thompson published a pioneering study of the convoluted historical fate of the durable/transient distinction. ‘Durable’ objects are meant to be preserved for a long, long time; they come as close as possible to embody and tokenize the otherwise abstract and ethereal notion of eternity; in fact, it is from the postulated or projected antiquity of the ‘durables’ that the image of eternity is extrapolated. Durable objects are assigned special value and are cherished and coveted thanks to their association with immortality - that ultimate value, ‘naturally’ desired and requiring no argument or persuasion to be embraced. The opposite of the ‘durable’ objects is ‘transient’ ones, meant to be used up - consumed - and to disappear in the process of their consumption.” Ibid.: 123-124.

to actually experience the moment that preservation is no longer a retroactive activity but becomes a prospective activity.”²

At the same time, heritage is gaining an increasing audience, as the people’s knowledge and education are on the rise, while leisure society enables the growing opportunities of movement and development of cultural tourism. Eventually, as architectural historian Françoise Choay observes, this inflation is inseparable from the transition of the industrial society era towards information society. Are these two processes, devaluation of immortality and inflation of cultural heritage, mutually connected? This paper attempts to investigate this question by employing theoretical hypotheses of several authors. The paper builds on the analysis of the set problem, or by examining the causes of liquid inflation of material cultural heritage, respectively. The latter are brought in connection with the changed perception of historicity in the last decade of the 20th century, directing the analysis towards the concept of hyperreality the way philosopher and sociologist Jean Baudrillard describes it. The question of the meaning of matter, which is at the heart of every material cultural artifact, and its newly established relationship to changed social reality, is the subject of discussion in this article. Considering the aspects of such meaning in a range between the authenticity of matter and its resource properties, the discussion leads to a conclusion outlining the limitations in understanding material cultural heritage through the prism of modern rationality, and therefore suggests the expansion of the framework of its perception, using hybrid concepts of cultural ecology by architect Thomas Will and quasi-objects by anthropologist and sociologist Bruno Latour.

Analysis of the problem: The image of historicity

One of the key events causing the inflation of cultural heritage is, according to Françoise Choay, the global triumph of Western modernity. Unlike postmodern thinkers that saw the breakdown of modernity in the 1970s, Choay, along with other authors, held that these unstable cultural and social events were a foretoken of a complete victory of the West.

“The globalization of Western values and references contributed to the ecumenical inflation of heritage practices. Emblematic of this inflation is the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 1972. This text traced directly from the concept of historic monument that of universal cultural heritage: monuments, groups of buildings, archaeological or inhabited sites of “outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.”! The universality of Western values and systems of thought on the subject was thereby proclaimed.”³

² Koolhaas, 2004: 2.

³ Choay, 2001: 140.

The triumph of the Western, that is capitalist values, has overwhelmed the feelings of the late 20th century world so much, that the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 was regarded as a symbolic end of entire history, which for Jean Baudrillard represented a strong and final myth implying the possibility of objective course of events and causes. “It is this fabulous character, the mythical energy of an event or of a narrative, that today seems to be increasingly lost. Behind a performative and demonstrative logic: the obsession with historical fidelity, with a perfect rendering (...), this negative and implacable fidelity to the materiality of the past, to a particular scene of the past or of the present, to the restitution of an absolute simulacrum of the past or the present, which was substituted for all other value - we are all complicitous in this, and this is irreversible.”⁴ Baudrillard argued, while comprehending a paradoxical process in which by hoarding objects of historical value the historical veracity is at the same time diminished. “Today, the history that is ‘given back’ to us (precisely because it was taken from us) has no more of a relation to a ‘historical real’ than neofiguration in painting does to the classical figuration of the real. Neofiguration is an invocation of resemblance, but at the same time the flagrant proof of the disappearance of objects in their very representation: hyperreal.”⁵ Surrounded with increasing quantities of historical objects, saturated with material traces of former cultures, at the end of the previous century the Eurocentric world was less and less in touch with its own historicity. What seemed as historical reality, existed only to confirm that history no longer existed. That shift from the signs representing something to the signs concealing that there is nothing represents for Baudrillard a decisive turn towards the simulated representation of reality, which he labels as hyperreality. “Representation stems from the principle of the equivalence of the sign and of the real (even if this equivalence is Utopian, it is a fundamental axiom). Simulation, on the contrary, stems from the Utopia of the principle of equivalence, from the radical negation of the sign as value, from the sign as the reversion and death sentence of every reference. Whereas representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum.”⁶

There is a reason why material historical heritage is convenient for this operation of wrapping reality with hyperreality, additionally providing arguments for its increasing popularity. According to Françoise Choay, the purpose of a historical monument, as a metaphorical object, is to “recall to life a privileged past and reimmerse the observer in that past.”⁷ However, once historical monuments no longer function as signs of a particular historical reality, they transform into an image, a “weightless replica in which

⁴ Baudrillard, 2001:72.

⁵ *Ibid.*: 68.

⁶ *Ibid.*: 14.

⁷ Choay, 2001: 9. Therefore, “historical heritage has become one of the master words of the media tribe. It refers at once to an institution and to a mentality.” *Ibid.*: 1.

their symbolic value is reassembled and detached from their utilitarian value.”⁸ What is the purpose that historical heritage acquires once it is in such a way detached from its own values and reduced to an image of simulated reality? Choay believes that this role is key for understanding contemporary culture. “The historical heritage seems today to play the part of a great mirror in which we members of late twentieth-century societies contemplate our own image. In other words, selective observation and treatment of the historical heritage no longer tends to create a dynamically assumed cultural identity, but appears to be replaced by passive contemplation and the cult of a generic identity, in which we may readily identify the signs of narcissism. Thus the historical heritage has ceded its constructive function to a defensive one dedicated to the recollection (in every sense) of a threatened identity.”⁹ According to Choay, it is this threatened identity of the modern world, and its narcissistic defense mechanisms, that is the real reason for the inflation of cultural heritage today, which leads the growing masses of people to pilgrimage to various monuments around the world in an attempt to crystallize their cultural identities, blurred by the atmosphere of liquid modernity.

To respond to this growing demand, it was necessary to develop a complex cultural industry that is able to satisfy aspirations of increasingly large groups, searching for their lost identity in a mass of ancient stones or some other objects of history. Choay ascribes this process to the actors of cultural engineering, such as public-private partnerships, coordinators, communication experts, development agents, engineers, cultural mediators, etc. Their task is to exploit the monuments by all available means in order to expand their audience without limit. The purpose of cultural industry is to transform the location of the monument into a place of cultural event, while responding to the consumer society’s desire to be distracted, and legitimizing this type of entertainment by the lofty social status of the monument, while giving it a specificity that the mentioned generic identity of cultural industry does not possess. “Large performances are definitely the places of similar meaning for tourist marketing, and these events are the most successful when in an abundance of visual, acoustic and sociocultural sensations they can rely on the concrete presence of historical architecture”, as architect and conservator Thomas Will observes, concluding that in such a market “what monuments were once for the forming of identities of young national states, today they are for regions and communities in their competing for affinity of numerous visitors.”¹⁰

These visitors are constantly growing in number. Despite the justification that cultural industry provides the resources necessary to maintain the monuments, it is questionable how much damage is done by opening the monuments to the masses. Here economy needs to employ the irrational in order to prosper, and cultural industry needs to once again *enchant* the once disenchanting modern world to keep the illusion per-

⁸ Ibid.: 10.

⁹ Ibid.: 165.

¹⁰ Will, 2020:179.

sistent. “Like the nature and arts, also the miraculous remains of history can preserve and even return some kind of a remnant of aura to our enlightened ‘disenchanted’ world (Max Weber). By the duality of its presence and amazingness, they contribute to the ‘repeated enchantment of the world’ that is, faced with a levelled and reified life, otherwise sought differently. This repeated enchantment encompasses, as it seems to me, also the new retrieval of place and architectural heritage as tourist objectives.”¹¹ Nobody wants to doubt that illusion. It is this doubt that would be detrimental to our fragile identities blurred by the trade in goods. “As it happens, the image we contemplate in the patrimonial mirror, for all that it is reflected by real objects, is an illusion. The ‘recollection’ from which it results has erased all its differences, heterogeneities, and fractures. It reassures us and plays its protective part precisely by appearing to suppress the conflicts and interrogations we are unable to face: an efficient device against anxiety and helplessness in times of crisis, but a temporary one: the time required symbolically to suspend the course of history, to catch our breath in actuality, to take upon ourselves once more a destiny, an authentic reflexion.”¹²

Discussion: Materiality of heritage between authentic testimony and non-renewable resource

Despite the described crisis of historicity and enchantment of the world into hyper-reality, cultural heritage resists virtualization. Its essential quality, which cannot be disputed in any way, is the physical presence of matter. However, the question that this discussion raises is the way in which we perceive this cultural, i.e. man-made matter in the new context of liquid modernity? Does it still represent, as Choay has suggested, an authentic reflection that helps us take upon ourselves our destiny?

Nevertheless, prior to examining this question, we have to ask ourselves how destiny is taken upon oneself today? And what would its authentic reflection be? Loss of historicity, a belief that it brings a better tomorrow, is only one of the changes that, according to Bauman, followed the shift from solid to liquid modernity. “The second

¹¹ Ibid.: 176; Baudrillard’s hysterical depiction illustrates this contemporary trend. “The onslaught is the only act the masses can produce as such (...) The organizers (and the artists and intellectuals) are frightened by this uncontrollable watchfulness, because they never count on anything but the apprenticeship of the masses to the spectacle of culture. They never count on this active, destructive fascination, a brutal and original response to the gift of an incomprehensible culture, an attraction that has all the characteristics of breaking and entering and of the violation of a sanctuary. (...) The people come to touch, they look as if they were touching, their gaze is only an aspect of tactile manipulation. It is certainly a question of a tactile universe, no longer a visual or discursive one, and the people are directly implicated in a process: to manipulate/to be manipulated, to ventilate/to be ventilated, to circulate/to make circulate, which is no longer of the order of representation, nor of distance, nor of reflection. It is something that is part of panic, and of a world in panic. Panic in slow motion, no external variable. It is the violence internal to a saturated ensemble. *Implosion*.” Baudrillard, 2001:102.

¹² Choay, 2001:171.

seminal change is the deregulation and privatization of the modernizing tasks and duties. What used to be considered a job to be performed by human reason seen as the collective endowment and property of the human species has been fragmented ('individualized'), assigned to individual guts and stamina, and left to individuals' management and individually administered resources."¹³ If the first difference has led to the creation of Choay's narcissistic mirror, then this second difference can be described, while remaining in the psychological discourse, as an obsessive-compulsive self-critique of an individual. "The modernizing impulse, in any of its renditions, means the compulsive critique of reality. Privatization of the impulse means compulsive self-critique born of perpetual self-disaffection: being an individual *de jure* means having no one to blame for one's own misery."¹⁴

In such a world of self-critical individuals who have no one to blame for their lives except themselves, the internalized question of authentic self based on real immediate experience is becoming increasingly widespread, and the material relics of the past appear in that sense as pliable objects for that kind of sensory awareness. They are stable, we can rely on them in a world of increasingly rapid changes, they are solid enough for us to be able to ground our feeling of self on them. It is therefore no surprise that authenticity has become one of the main issues in today's increasingly fragmented world. To accomplish this opportunity of grounding one's own authentic experience, it is necessary to overcome an invisible border between a narcissistic mirror of simulated historicity and immerse one's entire body into the realm of cultural heritage. Ignore for a moment its visual characteristics, especially if they are additionally intensified by the technical means of cultural industry, in order to permeate into its essence, its tactility, on which each immediate, authentic experience is based. For it is tactility that represents the mother of all senses, as architect Juhani Pallasmaa suggests, so it is also unerringly related to our genuine feelings. "The eye is the organ of distance and separation, whereas touch is the sense of nearness, intimacy and affection. The eye surveys, controls and investigates, whereas touch approaches and caresses."¹⁵ Only if we dismiss the hegemony of the eye and the dictate of visual culture is it possible, according to Pallasmaa, to experience an authentic state of human existence, awareness of the feeling of self, and existence. Such a phenomenological approach to heritage, which requires its reception as immediate authentic reality, not blurred by any kind of mental structures, semantic interpretations, or rational reproductions, is based on the presumption that the very materiality of heritage itself, its physical consistency, possesses certain qualities of authenticity that can help us better understand our own authenticity.

The person that has taken phenomenology the furthest into the field of restoration was Cesare Brandi, who, building on Heidegger's thought, held that every work of

¹³ Bauman, 2000:35.

¹⁴ Ibid.: 43.

¹⁵ Pallasmaa, 2005:46.

art was a result of a unique creative process in which empirical existential perception is complemented with an internal phenomenological insight, in order to be realized in some material through an authentic creative process of the author. The material therefore takes over the manifestation of the cognitive process of gaining knowledge, which is much deeper than the very visual depiction, additionally adding to the importance of the material. “The material appears as what is necessary for an image’s epiphany”¹⁶ is a notable Brandi’s definition suggesting that the object of restoration is the material itself, i.e. the material part of a work of art, because an authentic creative process resulting with a certain work of art can never be repeated. The material on which the recognition of a work of art is manifested represents a testimony for Brandi. It records the traces of aging or destruction, stages the work’s authenticity, changes chemically, creates a patina, and confirms that the work is *genuine*. However, according to Thomas Will, genuity can imply both originality and authenticity. “Here genuity means that a historical object is identical to an object to which it refers by its appearance and structure, contrarily, authenticity means that a piece ‘works’, that it is consistent in itself, that it is expressed correctly.”¹⁷ Baudrillard asserted the same using the vocabulary of psychoanalysis:

“It seems to me that both arise from the mythical evocation of birth which the antique object constitutes in its temporal closure (...) beating the path back to the origins means regression to the mother; the older the object, the closer it brings us to an earlier age, to ‘divinity’, to nature, to primitive knowledge (...) The demand for authenticity is, strictly speaking, a very different matter. It is reflected in an obsession with certainty (...) we are fascinated with what has been created, and is therefore unique, because the moment of creation cannot be reproduced. Now, the search for the traces of creation (...) is also a search for a line of descent and for paternal transcendence. Authenticity always stems from the Father”¹⁸

Uniqueness of the father’s act of creation. Patriarchal authoritarianism. The moment of inception. Unrepeatability of the *here and now* event, frozen and preserved in the form of material endurance. Here lies the real value of authenticity, due to which

¹⁶ Brandi, 1977:9.

¹⁷ Will, 2020:98; Marko Špikić described political manipulation of the matter under the mask of its credibility by the following words: “Moral spirituality of *materia secunda*, modified by years or violent events, has since 1989 been turned into a strong political tool, even weapon, producing non-authentic wholesome images of damaged or lost monuments and places under the mask of aesthetics and revival of social harmony. More than ever, the changing of the monuments’ matter has become one of the central social instincts. From Russia and the Baltic to Mid-Europe and the Balkans, this implies a rise in martyr complexes that replace concrete and material works of art with results of an orchestrated desire. Testimonies of pain of our ancestors become vague and unacceptable, instigating collective amnesia. Artistic ‘matter’ that survives in a world that is changing should therefore, with its origin and fate, return into the centre of our attention.” Špikić, 2020:33.

¹⁸ Baudrillard, 2005:80-81.

cultural heritage can indeed be regarded as the relics of civic religion, as Thomas Will remarks, or in the words of Theodor Adorno, “the petrified emanation, sacral without sacral content, those are cues of the authenticity jargon, products of aura’s decay.”¹⁹ Here we are coming closer to the very core of today’s cultural heritage cult, or better said its delusion. In other words, what we laud as a relic glorifying it as the real objectification of aura in a quest for our lost father is but the traces of its decay.

It is not possible to describe the notion of the aura without the opinion of Walter Benjamin. He defines it as a one-time phenomenon of distance, no matter how close an object is. By observing the disappearance of this phenomenon in an age of technical reproduction of art works, he noticed that such a definition of aura is nothing other than “the formulation of the cult value of the work of art in categories of space and time perception. Distance is the opposite of closeness. The essentially distant object is the unapproachable one. Unapproachability is indeed a major quality of the cult image.”²⁰ It is therefore impossible to keep an aura of an object in times when members of mass society aspire to come close to their relics, when they wish to appropriate them both spatially and socially, adhere to them in an uninhibited tactile ecstasy. By destroying the cult of value by coming closer and preventing a distance, as Benjamin suggests, the gap of indistinctiveness is created, which is complemented by the notion of authenticity. “To the extent to which the cult value of the painting is secularized the ideas of its fundamental uniqueness lose distinctness. In the imagination of the beholder the uniqueness of the phenomena which hold sway in the cult image is more and more displaced by the empirical uniqueness of the creator or of his creative achievement. (...) Nevertheless, the function of the concept of authenticity remains determinate in the evaluation of art; with the secularization of art, authenticity displaces the cult value of the work.”²¹

Authenticity is therefore close to us, present and tactile. Simultaneously, it remains alien to us, retains nostalgia towards a distancing cult value that no longer exists. “Authentic was always considered to be something towards which there has already been a rupture, distance”, as Thomas Will maintains.²² It is therefore unsurprising that the authentic contains a certain quality of alien, non-belonging, of that specific odour of the deceased that accompanies each Oedipus’ quest for the father. Authenticity indeed

¹⁹ Will, 2020:199.; Adorno, 1978:57.

²⁰ Benjamin, 1935:131, f. 7.

²¹ Ibid.: f. 8 “Namely, the desire of contemporary masses to bring things ‘closer’ spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. (...) To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose ‘sense of the universal equality of things’ has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction.” Ibid.: 130-131.

²² Will, 2020:106.

is death,²³ and our compulsive quest for it, which only perpetuates the increasingly higher inflation of cultural heritage, returns us by deceit to the very source of our own misery, to the trading of goods that we wish to escape. “The fraud of genuineness goes back to bourgeois blindness to the exchange process. Genuine things are those to which commodities and other means of exchange can be reduced, particularly gold. But like gold, genuineness, abstracted as the proportion of fine metal, becomes a fetish.”²⁴

It is hard to fathom in this treatise why the secular capitalist society is so compulsively obsessed with a quest for the father. However, it is possible to describe the consequences that this quest causes. Describing compulsive behaviour as a kind of addiction, physician Gabor Maté asserted that such a behaviour is a response to stress and a way of mitigating trauma. The most widespread emotional triggers of stress are psychological factors such as uncertainty, conflict, lack of control and lack of information. “Society that creates these conditions, as capitalism inevitably does, is a superpowerful generator of stressors that burden human health”²⁵, Maté concludes. Such a description of today's social situation is in line with the term *risk society* by sociologists Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, in which as a driver of societal transformation no longer applies purposeful rationality, but rather collateral consequences, such as risks, dangers, individualization or globalization. “This term denotes a developmental phase of modern society, in which social, political, ecological and individual risks caused by the dynamics of innovation increasingly resist control and security institutions of industrial society.”²⁶

The more insecure people feel, the more they focus on material things, Maté asserts, because materialism promises fulfilment, “but instead offers hollow discontent, creates even more desires. That huge addictive spiral, which is self-preserved, is one of the mechanisms by which consumer society preserves itself by exploiting the very insecurities it creates.”²⁷ Such a quest for pleasure while lacking satisfaction is the main driver of economic development, but also the sociopathology of the most powerful entities “whose planetary offering of poison (harmful both for human health and human environment, [AN]) removes every indication of metaphor from the expression <toxic

²³ “Heidegger’s key sentences run in the following manner: ‘Death is Dasein’s *ownmost* possibility.’ (...) Death becomes the essence of the realm of mortality. This occurs in opposition to the immediate, which is characterized by the fact that it is there. Death thus becomes something that is artificially beyond the existent. Saved from the They it becomes the latter’s sublime counterpart; it becomes the authentic. Authenticity is death. The loneliness of the individual in death becomes the substratum of selfness.” Adorno, 1978:196.

²⁴ Adorno, 2002:85.

²⁵ Maté, 2022:276.

²⁶ Beck, 2001:41.

²⁷ Maté, 2023:252.

culture.”²⁸ The paradigm of general growth, on which our culture is currently based, and therefore also the growth of the quantity of cultural heritage, needs to be viewed not in economic terms of fulfilment of human needs, but rather within the frameworks of compulsive addiction of capital, as suggested by economist Serge Latouche, one of the leading scholars and activists of *degrowth movement*. “To say that exponential growth is incompatible with a finite world and that our capacity for consumption must not exceed the biosphere’s capacity for regeneration is so obvious that few would disagree. It is, on the other hand, much more difficult to accept that the inevitable effects of production and consumption have to be reduced (...) and that the logic of systematic and dramatic growth (which is driven by finance capital’s compulsive addiction to growth) has to be called into question, as does our way of life.”²⁹

The defining of boundaries to such a toxic growth has connected the domain of cultural heritage preservation with the protection of natural environment, directing the questions of conservation towards the general need for a more responsible management of resources. “The issue of conservation of cultural heritage has been applied to an increasingly broad spectrum of properties, and, at the same time, the policy of environmental sustainability in the development of the built environment has become essential as a part of the survival strategy on earth. The two policies have many issues in common. In both cases the question is about management of existing resources”³⁰, as Jukka Jokilehto, theoretician of conservationism suggests. He also notices that such a trend leads to a change in the values related to heritage itself; from those cultural and scientific to those social and economic, in practice transferring the questions of monument restoration to the questions of resource management, maintenance and preventive care.

From compulsive quest for a lost self to emphatic future based on care. Can we imagine such a turn? Can the frameworks of modernity, whether solid or liquid, enable such emancipation? Can a quiet provocation of monuments, as denoted by Hartwig Beseler, serve in this imagining of a different tomorrow? Thomas Will thinks it can. “This requires (...) that the maintenance of monuments is sometimes shifted from a strong orientation towards the past to the future, from the primacy of an ‘antiquarian observance of history’ to the understanding of monument as a current and relevant medium that by its concrete distinctiveness sustains and helps the development of ecological variability of cultural spaces in a flux of modern entropic tendencies”³¹

²⁸ Ibid.: 262-263. Describing the neurological basis of addiction, Gabor Maté distinguishes between the feeling of pleasure, which releases dopamine, and the feeling of satisfaction, which releases serotonin. “Pleasure lacking satisfaction, and especially if sought in immediate fulfilment, can be addictive, and thus profitable. Satisfaction does not sell products.” Ibid.: 254.

²⁹ Latouche, 2009:3.

³⁰ Jokilehto, 1999:292.

³¹ Will.: 84.

Conclusion: Cultural monuments as hybrids of cultural ecology

The breaking of the narcissistic mirror of historicity, removing of the authenticity curse from the matter, setting of boundaries to the compulsive wasting of resources. It seems that whichever path we choose, something is missing. If wishing to break the image of simulation, we become stranded in the mortality of the authentic. If wishing to detach ourselves from the fetishization of the authentic, the matter transforms into a resource in front of our eyes. On the other hand, if we want to protect that resource from consumption, we set the mirror of historicity in front of it. And it goes on and on. The conclusion of this paper enables us to ask ourselves whether the disruption of this vicious circle is even possible under the paradigm of modernity and its entropic tendencies?

One of the fundamental processes of the great disenchantment of the world, which modern rationality has been using since the Enlightenment, is the process of separation and specialization. It is modernity that separates nature from culture, object from subject, science from arts, religion from state, state from society,... The list could continue endlessly. Such divisions into autonomous spheres of human agency are followed by the growing multiplication of something that Bruno Latour calls *quasi-objects* – objects that are at the same time natural and historical, spontaneous and artificial, spiritual and material. The proliferation of such hybrids spills over all frameworks of separate disciplines and resists defining, leading by its abundance to the critical point of disruption of modernity itself, or its apparatuses of separation. Today, according to Latour, all three strategies of modern separating are powerless in relation to the proliferation of quasi-objects. They partially overlap with the topics described in this paper – the autonomization of language or meaning can be traced through the transformation of cultural heritage into the empty sign of simulacrum, the deconstruction of Western metaphysics is observed in the fetishization of authenticity, while the division of the pole of nature and the pole of society is visible in the reduction of monument to the notion of resource. In modernity, these three strategies of separation are accompanied, as Latour suggests, by four different repertoires of critique - naturalization, sociologization, placement in discourse and forgetting of being. “No single one of these resources makes it possible to understand the modern world. If they are put together but kept separate, the situation is still worse, for their results lead only to the ironic despair whose symptom is postmodernism. All these critical resources share the failure to follow both the work of the proliferation of hybrids and the work of purification. In order to exit from the postmoderns’ paralysis, it suffices to reutilize all these resources, but they must be pieced together and put to work in shadowing quasi-objects or networks.”³² The intention of this research is to do precisely so.

³² Latour, 2010:84-85.

What if we viewed monuments as a form of quasi-objects? If we disregarded for a moment the procedure of separation that we undertake while perceiving these objects, if we did not divide their matter into authentic and non-authentic, and their origin into natural or historical. What if we approached them as hybrids created by a longlasting practice of mixing? "Real as Nature, narrated as Discourse, collective as Society, existential as Being: such are the quasi-objects that the moderns have caused to proliferate. As such it behoves us to pursue them, while we simply become once more what we have never ceased to be: amoderns."³³ What would our agency over these monuments understood as hybrids look like?

Throughout the whole 20th century, architects and conservators were guided by the process of separation in treating cultural heritage, so inherent to modernity. "Conservators would understand an old building in its historical uniqueness. In this moment it was not allowed to finish it stylistically. And the new, due to protection of the purity and distinctiveness from the authentic old, had to actually look new. (...) Conversely, architects, as advocates of the presently labelled new construction, demanded the new as a moral category; in contrast to the old, the new had to be highlighted as the position of the future."³⁴ Today, as Thomas Will claims, the interest is once again turning to the synthesis and harmonization within the general depiction of something that Will labels as cultural ecology. "Instead of some aesthetically mediated age value (Riegl) or national sentiment (Dehio), there is a growing embodiment of a differentiated abundance of cultural projects and life forms in space and time, which establish the value and evaluation of historical witnesses of culture. In this sense, maintenance of monuments eventually appears to me to be a kind of cultural ecology, a beautiful and optimistic image of guidance that does not cast doubt on the value of memory, but embeds it in the concept of care focused on the future."³⁵

This brings us to the question of a different way of aesthetic expression, which can be described as *reparation*, a special form of something that Thomas Will calls the art of the necessary. "Today, reparation is a particular pragmatic form of restauration. And *vice versa*, restauration can be outlined as a specific, primarily artistic, scientific and

³³ Ibid.: 111.

³⁴ Will, 2020:71.

³⁵ Ibid.,: 195-196. "Similarly, the maintenance of monuments can also be understood as a domain of ecology that is not focused on natural, but cultural life resources. The maintenance of monuments thus means the towards-the-future oriented preservation of the richness of species that exist in the built environment. It is a part of the practical ecology of a city. Let us refer here only incidentally to the explicitly ecological role of monuments' maintenance in the preservation of natural resources: recycling of old building materials in the circulation of energy and use, saving of problematic building materials, promotion of more demanding in terms of work, but more economical in terms of material craft techniques, avoidance of additional exploitation of brownfields, longtermism as a guiding principle.", Ibid.,: 79.

arts-crafts form of reparation.”³⁶ Reparation thus approaches damage without prejudices. What else are we left with in a world damaged by risks, in a society based on traumas, in perceptions based on narcissistic illusions?

“I am not saying that we are entering a new era; on the contrary we no longer have to continue the headlong flight of the post-post-postmodernists; we are no longer obliged to cling to the avant-garde of the avant-garde; we no longer seek to be even cleverer, even more critical, even deeper into the «era of suspicion». No, instead we discover that we have never begun to enter the modern era. This retrospective attitude, which deploys instead of unveiling, adds instead of subtracting, fraternizes instead of denouncing, sorts out instead of debunking, I characterize as nonmodern (or amodern).”³⁷

Do we see a new direction in the treatment of heritage in this? Does this bring to the overcoming of confining procedures of modern separation and the opening of a new outlook on hybrid artifacts? By deploying and adding, sorting out and fraternizing we can get a perspective on the forces of the collective that every monument has, while at the same time omitting for a moment the modern dilemma whether it is nature or history, progress or regress. By focusing on the cultural ecology of our setting, that humanized landscape that encompasses all that has been said, developing its richness and diversity against contemporary entropies, and dedicating ourselves when shaping the monuments “not as much to the border as to the crossing”³⁸, as David Chipperfield suggests, we are able to realize the sense of wholeness in all its unattainability. To be pragmatic. To dismiss inebriating narratives. To patch up disjointed wholeness. To help ourselves with what we have. To heal the wounds incurred. To decide what we repair, and what we do not. What we integrate and appropriate, and what we disregard. To mix separated systems into a wholesome picture. To present ourselves the way we are. Not less, not more than that.

³⁶ Ibid.,: 142. “In most works on maintenance of monuments in the German language, reparation has nowadays gained priority over renovation of damaged parts. The fact that authors educated as architects or engineers place greater importance on reparation than do art historians or restaurators is in the nature of the professional viewpoint. Nevertheless, the respective domain of functional maintenance and enabling of functioning in most cases strongly differs from conservation and restauration, because the latter still emphasize the re-establishment of the aesthetic appearance.” Ibid.,: 153.

³⁷ Latour, pp. 65-66.

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Spomenici devalvirane besmrtnosti

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Sažetak

Jednu od promjena koju Zygmunt Bauman uočava u procesima tekuće modernosti je sve veće favoriziranje trenutačnosti i prolaznosti, dok se istovremeno trajnost iz prednosti pretvara u ograničenje. U takvim okolnostima nagovještava se jedna vrsta kulturnog prevrata uvjetovanog “devalvacijom besmrtnosti”. Međutim, paralelno s procesom Baumanove devalvacije besmrtnosti u svijetu se od 60-ih godina prošlog stoljeća odvija sve ubrzanija inflacija kulturne baštine. Članak istražuje moguće uzroke te inflacije, kao i načine uspostavljanja novog odnosa do materijalne zbilje kulturne baštine, temeljene na skrbi i reparaturi kao dio šire odgovornosti do kulturne ekologije. Analizom je inflacija baštine dovedena u vezu s promijenjenom predodžbom povijesnosti u posljednjem desetljeću 20. stoljeća, što upućuje na koncept hiperzbilje kako ga opisuje Jean Baudrillard. Pitanje značenja materije, koja se nalazi u srži svakog materijalnog kulturnog artefakta, i njegovog novouspostavljenog odnosa do promijenjene društvene zbilje, predmet je rasprave ovog članka. Razmatrajući aspekte takvog značenja u rasponu između autentičnosti materije i njezina svojstva resursa rasprava vodi ka zaključku u kojemu se ocrtavaju ograničenja u poimanju materijalne kulturne baštine kroz prizmu modernog racionaliteta, te se stoga sugerira proširenje okvira njezine percepcije, služeći se hibridnim pojmovima kulturne ekologije arhitekta Thomasa Willa i kvaziobjekata antropologa i sociologa Bruna Latoura.

Ključne riječi: modernost, baština, autentičnost, konzervatorstvo, reparatura.