

NATURE AND MISSION OF HERITAGE IN MODERNITY: IMPACTS OF NATIONALISM

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Розглянуто тему походження, характеру і місії сучасної культурної спадщини. Спадщина є важливим джерелом для інших сфер – культури, політики, економіки. Чи може вона бути тільки джерелом? Спробуємо довести, що не тільки. Ставиться питання – чи може культура, політика чи націоналізм у сучасну епоху існувати без спадщини?

Націоналізм появився зі сучасною людиною і оволодів всією його сутністю – розумом, почуттями, духом. Він є головною ідеологією сучасності. Створення епохи – культурна/історична пам'ять, наука, історія, спадщина нації – якщо не всією своєю цілісністю, то хоча б значною мірою також перетворились на його прислугу. Втім для існування націоналізму необхідне минуле. Оскільки сучасне суспільство має два шляхи в минуле – *історію* (наука, яка відкриває чи створює минуле) і спадщина (об'єкти, які перебуваючи в сучасності представляють минуле), тому спадщина для націоналізму є дуже важливою. Тим самим історія і спадщина є найважливішими джерелами заснування нації. У цьому разі спадщина виконує не тільки легітимізацій, але і функцію конструювання та єднання суспільства.

Історія взаємодії націоналізму і спадщини продовжується вже два століття. Ця спільна історія розпочалась з духу народу. Для самовираження духу народу спадщина була життєво важливою. Дух народу так і залишився би тільки філософією, якщо б його десь не можна було б втілити. Найчастіше він втілюється саме в спадщині. Такий гармонійний симбіоз між націоналізмом і спадщиною розвивався до четвертої декади ХХ ст. Після цього симбіоз націоналізму розвивається і далі, але дещо помірковано.

Ключові слова: націоналізм, спадщина, ЮНЕСКО.

The mission of heritage can be interpreted as *a value in itself*. In this case, heritage is considered an intrinsic value which contains pre-defined, “superhuman” (allegedly not social), substantive values and which must be fostered as such; the emergence of different approaches to heritage and its values are seen as “limitations” and “errors” of human understanding. However the widespread attitude that heritage values are subjective and socially assigned¹ makes such an interpretation controversial at the very least. There is also an alternative version stemming from the insight that heritage has a more pragmatic function rather than being an intrinsic value: it is an important resource for other spheres. You can here invoke *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, a classic work by John E. Tunbridge and Gregory J. Ashworth. The authors concluded that heritage as a resource was used in at least three

areas: culture, politics and economy [17, p. 34–68]. Service to others can be considered the “true” nature of heritage. Let us call it *functionalist* interpretation. Such service will obviously entail fatalistic effects: culture, politics, and economy are not only the users of heritage but also the formants of the very phenomenon of heritage. They affect the essence of heritage - from conception (what constitutes heritage, what is its social mission, what meanings can be attributed to it) to fostering practices. Reflections on the mission and functions of heritage are usually accomplished at this regard [5, p. 18–21]. But is it true that service is all that heritage is capable of? We will try to prove that this is not so precisely. We will replace the question of the mission of heritage with the following one: Would it be possible for the main heritage users – *culture, politics*² or *nationalism* – to exist without heritage in modernity?

¹ E.g., *The Nara Document on Authenticity* (1994; it is one of the most famous international instruments in recent decades, setting out a general position of UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS) declares that “All judgements about values attributed to cultural properties [...] may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. It is thus not possible to base judgements of values and authenticity within fixed criteria”. In 2005 attempts were made to move a relativistic concept of heritage into practice by making a framework principle of the World Heritage selection [12, a.11; 16, p. 20, 91–93].

² The subject of our research is the modern society of the 19th century and the 1st half of the 20th century. Cultural and political interaction with heritage is evident in both societies, but the economic factor is entrenched only in post-modern society (which is followed by the development of *heritage industry* and phenomenon of *heritage as a product*). As a result, the economic factor remains outside the chronological frame of this study. On the other hand, heritage is not so vital to the functioning of the economy as it is in culture and politics.

Modernity, which is of utmost importance to us, is also the age of nationalism. Nationalism³ is an implacable power that emerged together with the modern man; took possession of his whole being – mind, emotions and soul; became an integral part of its inner self – existential necessity and the world (world awareness). It is both the main ideology and the outstanding feature of the epoch. It fundamentally changed the cultural and political framework and the interaction between them thereby making them its servant⁴. Inventions of modernity – cultural / historical memory, science of history, the nation's heritage – were also employed by it, if not in their entirety, then at least in significant part. We will be even bolder and declare that heritage is not only influenced by nationalism; it is to be regarded the product of nationalism. In other words, nationalism has created heritage as a handy phenomenon for itself (in fact, this creation necessitated contributors or “coauthors”, for example, the historical consciousness). The modern concept of heritage should be deemed to have come into the world, alas, the novel guise of heritage is so radically and so obviously different from its predecessor that nobody would dare blame us for viewing it as a separate phenomenon.

Violence and benefits of History

There are several theories of interpretation of the nature of nationalism. One of the key differences in the attitudes and frictions among them is a divergent approach to the phenomenon of the *nation*. Here we will follow the *constructivist* (or *modernist*) perspective which does not take the nation as natural or granted. There are specific prerequisites that modernity alone can afford for the nation, as well as nationalism, to emerge, in which case, the nation and nationalism are nothing other than the constructs of modernity. Communities used to show more faithfulness to religion, lords, proprietors, estate and local communes compared to the nation before the dawn of modernity and nationalism⁵.

³ Here the very *nationalism* is perceived as a provision (belief, faith, ideology, etc.) that the individual has to belong to any particular nation or identify himself with that nation. This provision is experienced by an individual or society as an existential necessity and is considered the most appropriate “world order”. However, the nation alone is not enough for nationalism. To paraphrase Ernest Gellner, its self-realization occurs only when nation find themselves home: they have a territory, political power in the territory, and a common culture overlaying all that territory. In other words, the total congruence and homogeneity of the nation, territory, political power and culture are required.

⁴ In this case, references are made to Ernest Gellner's insights [6, p. 34–37, 38–51].

⁵ The alternative concept of the nature of nationalism is called *primordialistic* or *evolutionistic*. It is based on the assumption that the nation is a natural human phenomenon

Manifestations of nationalism can accordingly be discovered at best in the 18th century which saw the birth of first modern nations⁶.

It is a constructivist access that reveals one of the paradoxes of nationalism, which is pretending to be older than it is indeed. This did not escape the attention of some of nationalism scholars, such as Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner.

[Paradoxes of nationalism:] (1) The objective modernity of nations to the historian's eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists. [1, p. 5]

[...] nationalism is *not* the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force, thought that is how it does indeed present itself. It is in reality the consequence of a new social organisation, based on deeply internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state. [6, p. 46]

This is the reason why nationalism needs *the past*. The general perception is that nationalism does not need to make excuses and prove its legitimacy before anything but the past. But why should the past be used as or for an excuse? Why not experience fullness being just what you truly are - a neologism devoid of the past? The answer may be that nationalism as a fatal power itself had to put up with another modern development – historical awareness. Similarly to radical transformation of cultural, political and overall societal setting by nationalism, historical development fundamentally altered the perception of time, values and self. The surrounding world, as well as modern society, is perceived from a mere historical perspective: no past, no worthiness, and no general right to exist; the right to be in existence does not emerge at present, it derives from the past. The upspringing historical consciousness has

(naturally existing from ancient times) and that every nation can be distinguished by basically stable (unchanging, archetypal) features. Accordingly, nationalism is treated as a long encoded tendency and the consequence or self-realization of a historical continuing process (evolution).

⁶ When defining a *nation*, two perspectives need to be distinguished. Retrospective (where the current standards and norms are imposed upon the past) or external (where the foundation for commonality is seen as similar material culture, traditions, language, or other similar external signs rather than communal affinity, self-determination or self-identification) attribution of communities to one or another nation - so modern nations can be discovered in any historical period whatsoever; same as national self-awareness of the community, a conscious awareness of belonging to a particular nation. This awareness is accompanied by increase in value of national identity (identification with a nation is no less important than identification with religion or anything else) the cardinal transformation of the public order. Such self-awareness, same as the nations themselves, starts upspringing from the 18th century.

essentially transformed the community's memory (mythological memory was replaced with historical memory⁷) and began to explain the "reality" historically (the interpreter's privilege was given the history of science). At the very start, nationalism was inevitably faced with its contemporary – the cult of the history. Being unable to avert the historicity, nationalism however did not only obey this tyranny itself but made its own service. The creation of the past became the national monopoly which was been maintained at least until the 30ties of the twentieth century. The past was designed in a way that would justify nationalism itself – its alleged antiquity, values, needs or expectations. It is how the past becomes part of the discourse of nationalism, its indispensable component. Modern society has merely two channels into the past: *history* (the science that reveals or creates the past) and *heritage* (objects that represent the past while being present) consequently heritage should be of extreme importance to nationalism.

Senescence tendency in nationalism is quite obvious through national identity construction. As a piece of nationalism, the nation is essentially a new social form that has neither analogue nor consistency in the past. Its history, culture and legacy are as new as it is itself, being of the 18th, 19th century or subsequent centuries. However, the nation's affinity is "discovered" not only in them but also the older epochs. Symbols unifying pre-modern communities usually have a common historical and cultural background. They consolidate and strengthen what has in fact already existed with its inherent past and tradition. In case of the nation, unifying symbols are used to create the non-existing past that would meet the needs and expectations of the nation rather than consolidate the existing experiences of the past. The historical and cultural commonality is discovered where it has never existed, at least in a form proclaimed by nationalism. And this supposedly common past is one of the strongest and most suggestive motifs for the nation to stay close together today. History and heritage are becoming an important, if not the most important, source of the nation's commonality justification and sense of community. In this case, heritage performs not only a legitimate but also a community mobilizing or constructing function. This is the mission of heritage, benefits of its for nationalism.

Spirit of the Nation

The story of nationalism and heritage relationship has already been going on for two centuries. This mutual

⁷ A cultural memory, such as perceived today, is not universal and global. The most novel form of a cultural memory is historical memory and predecessive mythological memory which shows complete intolerance for history.

story began with *the nation spirit*. The latter can be seen as both a theoretical and philosophical idea, but given the 19th century it can no longer be treated as an abstract; it is the faith that has affected the consciousness of the masses and taken on practical forms. The concept of nation spirit was first mentioned in works by French and German thinkers of the 18th century. When considering the forms of government and the natural law in 1748, Frenchman Charles de Montesquieu argued that climate affected people's mentality, customs, traditions, and mental functioning (*The Spirit of the Laws*, 1748). As a result, there can be no single universal model of governance and the mode of each state's governance has to be adapted to the conditions of the particular state. Consequently, the natural law in different locations must be different [11, p. 246–260 and etc.]. In his *Outline of a Philosophical History of Humanity* (1784-1791), Johann Gottfried Herder associated the essence of the people with the *nation's character* or *genetic spirit*, Herderian equivalents of the spirit of the nation. According to him, they are the creative soil of the nation, the historical and cultural driver. They provide life, identity and singularity. They constitute an immortal and unchanging essence of the nation. This character or spirit is palpable and manifests itself through the nation's language, customs, traditions, values and creations [11, p. 819–835; compare 3, p. 93–98, 121–124]. This is how the spirit of the nation was seen by J. G. Herder. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, another influential German thinker, made the national spirit part of a larger project; he considered it the cultural-historical projection of the absolute spirit. Accordingly, a mutual struggle of various national spirits was deemed a driver of historical development. The very spirit of the nation was expressed through its empirical form - nation - as well as religion, art, law, politics or philosophy [compare 3, p. 156, 159–161, 178–180].

The idea of the spirit of the nation was not an end in itself. At the same time, the concept of the nation and the fundamental principles of nationalism were evolving. It was in J. G. Herder's philosophy that the "formula" of nationalism was discovered: one nation – one state – one culture.

Nature educates families: the most natural state therefore is *one* nation, with one national character [7, p. 325]

And he began to treat nation as an archaic formation emerging at the dawn of the human era.

Hence that striking national character, which, deeply imprinted on the most ancient people, is unequivocally displayed in all their operations on the Earth. As a mineral water derives its component parts, its operative powers, and its flavour, from the

soil through which it flows; so the ancient character of nations arose from the family features, the climate, the way of life and education, the early actions and employments, that were peculiar to them. The manners of the fathers took deep root, and became the internal prototype of the race. [8, p. 108]

In the meantime, W. F. Hegel pointed out that the state is the objectivization of the nation spirit moreover it is the only home of the nation. Thus, the same authors that bestowed the spirit of the nation with the content, laid the ideological foundations of nationalism. Hence the ideas of the spirit of the nation, nation and nationalism belong to the same nationalist discourse. With nationalism coming into the world, it was necessary to create an explanation and justification why thitherto segregated public groups were now beginning to be hold one community – a nation. The total economy and common communication space have served true links for this new community. Nevertheless, human nature demanded something more essential, generous and deeper. In addition, true links could not conceal the young age of nation (which was contrary to the truths of nationalism). The spirit of the nation was free from these shortcomings – it was exactly what nationalism needed. The mere fact that the nation's spirit was the spirit gave it mandatory and incredibly strong connecting powers.

The concept of national spirit invoked a provision – there is a spirit that can merge the past and present of the nation into one entity. Meanwhile, a modern person more or less perceives the present and past as realities however featuring huge differences; they are separated by an insurmountable gap; the past is understood as irreversible and unique. This can be called historical thinking. Historical thinking and the idea of the nation spirit are basically contradictory however this fact did not prevent them from occurring at the same time and in the same society. According to the opinion observed at that time (or at least according to the history of philosophy), the spirit of the nation was the driver of the history wherefore the history itself had to conform to these spiritual truths. The spirit, in turn, upheld that the nation is an old formation that emerged at the dawn of the human era; that all of his countrymen, dead, living or arriving, are obligated by the mission to serve the nation and fight for the sake of it; that the dead, the living or the arriving are made a single community and even contemporaries by the spirit of the nation and the common missions [1, p. 197–199]. This is how the ideas of the spirit of the nation became part of historical consciousness. The same historical consciousness differed from that of today because of the 19th century impact on the national spirit.

Invariability of the nation is another characteristic of the nation spirit. According to this concept, a medieval and the 19th century French shared the same spirit, the

same genius of the nation and, of course, the same representation of the genius. And that means that if, say, the Middle Ages coincided with the golden age of the nation (the golden ages were excellent settings for geniuses to represent themselves), then the 19th century Frenchman had and was able to create in a medieval fashion and style. Heritage expressed such attitude perfectly. In the 19th century, the flourish of nationalism, history and nation spirit witnessed the prosperity of stylistic restoration, the specific form of heritage restoration. These days, stylistic restoration practices are considered brutal and harmful to heritage. However, it was then applied to the most valuable national objects. In the French nation's case, it was the Gothic cathedrals and castles, no matter Baroque or Renaissance, the fairest and most magnificent expression of the French spirit and its uniqueness that were deprived of their golden layers during Restoration period. The missing parts of gothic structures, the towers, the ruined or demolished buildings parts, or simply missing construction parts were simply and placidly built by hand. Restoration did in any way seek to restore the grandeurs once existed or could have existed. The famous definition by Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Du can sound very eloquently in this case:

To restore an edifice means neither to maintain it, nor to repair it, nor to rebuild it; it means to reestablish it in a finished state, which may in fact have never existed at any given time [18, p. 314].

Like others of his contemporaries, E. Viollet-le-Duc bravely applied this form in practice – it was perfectly acceptable and dominant with the heritage of 19th century. The historic principle was ignored (in the present day terms). Creation was aimed at structuring the perfect image to match the best of Gothic imagery, i.e. the genius of the French nation. The 19th century French restorer felt like a medieval architect or builder fully empowered to adjust or extend the “authentic” medieval pieces of work. He was entitled to do so by the spirit of the nation.

Heritage was influenced by the spirit of the nation. However, heritage was also vital for the nation's spiritual expression. The spirit of the nation would have remained nothing more than philosophy if it could not be embodied. And it usually is embodied in heritage. The then understanding of heritage again is significantly different from the current one. To assume visually, today the boundaries of heritage and the nation's spiritual expressions do not match. Heritage, to some but not to the full extent, became a phenomenon in itself. Modern society is obsessed by a passion of accumulation or the so-called Noah's complex of simple storage, without trying to ascertain whether the things stored do possess any real, not merely declaratory, value to society. Meanwhile, the 19th century heritage was considered to

be undoubtedly an expression of the spirit of the nation such as the Gothic era legacy for the French, or, say, mounds for the Lithuanians [9, p. 183–205].

Instead of Conclusions: Overcoming Nationalism and Fate of Heritage

Such a harmonious symbiosis of nationalism and heritage flourished until the 30s of the 20th century. As pointed out by Pierre Nora, it was precisely the time of quite a substantive important turning point in the public consciousness. Until then, the public has been preoccupied with a historic national myth. In terms of its functions and structure, history at the time was mythological, and its main mission was to legitimize the nation. This myth was the main existential pillar of social framework. 1930s saw a decay of the historic national myth. The reasons seemed to be lurking in the fractures of the same historical consciousness. At the time, the “history of history” or critical history emerged. According to P. Nora, having formerly underlain the basis of the myth of the nation, history became the subject of critical analysis of history itself: history set itself a goal to disclose what is not historic inside it. History encroached on sacredness of its own and the nation at the same time [13, p. 633; 15, p. 5–6]. The spirit of the nation died.

Heritage also underwent transformation. Now it has become associated not only with the nation but also science. This affected heritage definitions and behaviours in respect of it. Initially, heritage was seen not only as the embodiment or expression of the nation but also as potential relevance to science or importance to future generations. Heritage has become a statistical rather than a significant or stock unit. Second, stylistic restoration was completely abandoned. Heritage management was not aimed at tailoring heritage with the images of the nation’s genius; instead attempts were made to either leave it as it was or at least give it its former shape (the uniqueness of a particular object replaced the style). The First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments took place in Athens in 1931, where a new ideal instead of stylistic restoration appeared, the cult of heritage historical matter. It has become the dominant trend in heritage promotion in Europe [10, p. 1–3].

When, as the result of decay or destruction, restoration appears to be indispensable, it recommends that the historic and artistic work of the past should be respected, without excluding the style of any given period. [2, a. 1]

New heritage interpretation trends were meant as another blow to nationalism and heritage symbiosis. When the 40s of the 20th century focused on the causes

of World Wars, nationalism and its controlled culture did not escape attention either. Nationalism was named as the cause of wars, and the goal to cultivate *a culture of peace* in humanity was set. To this end, UNESCO was established in 1945. From then on, heritage had to become the wealth of all mankind instead of the nation. It was put in practice in the 7th decade of the 20th century when the World Heritage program was launched.

The Governments of the States Parties to this [UNESCO] Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare:

- That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed;
- That ignorance of each other’s ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war; [...]
- That a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. [4, p. 5]

However, it comes to real or coveted death of nationalism since the outcome of the Second World War. Nationalism continues to successfully exist only in externally subdued forms. Nationalism and heritage symbiosis is also alive. It thrives in two phenomena. Not all objects of heritage today are relevant for nationalism but there are some objects that continue to perform the symbolic rallying function of the nation. Such a phenomenon was defined as *Realms of memory* concept by P. Nora [14, p. XVII–XVIII; 15, p. 14–15]. There is another case. Though the authenticity paradigm of heritage historical matter prohibiting heritage restoration and conversions is officially advocated, in practice, the paradigm of the historical view authenticity is quite vivid and has the aim to restore a complete picture of heritage. These are fairly expensive projects usually undertaken on objects with rallying capacities.

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