

The Complexity of Authenticity

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This paper examines a variety of contexts where the notion of authenticity has been applied, illustrating some of the contradictions that result. The paper starts with an examination of the definition of the concept, and the different attitudes to its definition in relation to tangible and intangible cultural heritages. In particular, reference is made to the 2004 Conference in Nara proposing to integrate the two UNESCO conventions of 1972 and 2003, and to adopt the so-called Yamato Declaration. The paper then refers to the 1994 Conference on Authenticity in Nara, which produced the Nara Document on Authenticity, and particularly to the critical paper on authenticity presented by Mme Françoise Choay during the conference, where she claimed, referring to the World Heritage context, that the concept of authenticity cannot really be taken as a 'universal'. The definition of the work of art by Cesare Brandi and other modern thinkers, such as Walter Benjamin, are mentioned in reference to the restoration theory highlighting some of the consequences of the definition of authenticity. Finally, the paper examines some aspects of authenticity and their identification in relation to different types of heritage.

Defining the concept

The word 'authentic' is generally connected to its Greek root of ΑΥΤΟΣ, meaning self, oneself. It is common in various combinations, such as automatic (self-acting), automobile (moving by itself), autograph (written by one's own hand), etc. The current English definition of the word 'authentic' is given as 'of authority', 'legally valid', 'first hand', 'real', 'genuine' (Oxford English Dictionary, 1975). The word, being of European origin, does not necessarily have exact equivalents in other languages. Nevertheless, attempts have been made to find the closest reference. In any case, a difference should be made with concepts such as 'original', 'identity', 'identical' etc. Normally, the opposite of 'authentic' would be 'inauthentic' but also: 'false' or 'fake'.¹

In the modern world, the concept of authenticity has become fashionable. It is used in a variety of situations, including the commercial definition of artisan-like, and even in describing industrial products. In particular, the concept has been closely associated

¹ J. Jokilehto, Questions about "authenticity". – Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention. Preparatory Workshop, Bergen, Norway, 31.01.–02.02.1994. Eds. K.-E. Larsen, N. Marstein. Oslo: Riksantikvaren, 1994, pp. 17–34.

with debates regarding the historical and artistic authentication of documents, works of art, archaeological finds and historical structures. It is, thus, not surprising that it is often used by conservation students as a theme for their theses. Together with the notion of 'integrity', the concept of authenticity is one of the conditions required for the justification of placing cultural properties on the World Heritage List of UNESCO. In some ways, the notions of authentic and fake seem to have become representative of our contemporary world.

In 2004, a UNESCO conference in Nara debated the possibility of working out an integrated approach to the safeguarding of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.² The conclusions of this conference were adopted in the *Yamato Declaration on Integrated Approaches for Safeguarding Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage*.³ The participants represented the two UNESCO Conventions: World Heritage of 1972 and Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003. The meeting was not without conflicts between those who defended the protection of historic monuments, and those who placed an emphasis on the intangible cultural heritage. Indeed, the resulting document can be seen as a compromise between these two approaches. The idea of the specialists representing the 2003 Convention was to emphasise continuous re-creation as an essential feature of living traditions. Therefore, they considered that living traditions could not be evaluated in the same way as the World Heritage properties, which were generally based on material evidence. Consequently, the question of authenticity was not considered to be relevant in relation to living cultural traditions. The specialists representing the 1972 Convention instead stressed that tangible and intangible aspects of heritage needed to be seen together as complementary.

In an example given during the debate, a Swedish musicologist referred to Brahms' piano music, which today is interpreted quite differently from how it was interpreted in the 19th century. Consequently, he observed that it was impossible to talk about authenticity in this regard. Indeed, it is true that we do not know and perhaps cannot know exactly how music was interpreted or how it was intended to be interpreted during the composer's time. We mostly rely on written descriptions, though there are also other sources of information, such as original instruments or bowing instructions for violin players. In fact, since the 19th century there have been many changes in the way music is performed and how it is perceived. Even the instruments have changed. In any case, we do know that for Brahms it was necessary to feel the music. Therefore, he did not want to give too precise instructions, but rather gave a certain freedom to the interpreter.⁴ Similarly, the compositions by Bach or Händel, Vivaldi or Corelli were often adjusted to different instruments, and reinterpreted according to available possibilities. Therefore, a certain freedom of interpretation should be seen as part of the idea of musical performance.

The culture of music evolves over time – as does any aspect of culture. So, it is clear that a piece of music should be seen in relation to two aspects: the composition

2 Proceedings. International Conference on the Safeguarding of Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage: Towards an Integrated Approach, Nara, Japan, 20–23 October 2004. Paris: UNESCO, 2006.

3 http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/23863/10988742599/Yamato_Declaration.pdf/Yamato_Declaration.pdf (5.11.2009).

4 M. Musgrave, B. D. Sherman, *Performing Brahms: early evidence of performance style*. Cambridge: CUP, 2003.

and the interpretation. How close to the original intentions or how freely should a pianist or a violinist or a singer interpret a piece from the past, whether it be by Bach, Brahms or even by a more recent composer? This is obviously an open question, which may not have a single response. By listening to the Canadian pianist Glenn Gould's interpretations, one can easily see that he has studied each composition with great care.⁵ In his writings and his interviews, he describes in detail how he feels about each composer. The closest to him was certainly Johann Sebastian Bach. It has been said that when he plays Chopin, the music really is Glenn Gould's Chopin. However, when he plays Bach, the 'Gould aspect' tends to vanish, and there remains only Bach! It is difficult to say which is 'better'.

It is not easy to define authenticity in music. Certainly, this definition depends on various aspects, partly related to the original composition, partly to the interpreter, but it also depends on the instrument and the audience. Music is a holistic phenomenon which can leave issues to be debated. That may well be the reason why people can dedicate their lives to music. Music is a source of inspiration and creativity. It is an intangible dimension of our life. Music has quality and character which are open to those who want and are able to listen. And to listen and understand requires time and dedication. Some music opens to the listener more easily than other music. Music can be interpreted in a genuine and authentic manner, and it can also be 'destroyed' by lack of understanding.

Authenticity in Heritage Conservation

The 2004 conference was organised ten years after the 1994 Nara Conference, which produced the well-known *Nara Document on Authenticity*,⁶ highlighting the importance of cultural diversity and the recognition of the immaterial aspects and qualities of cultural heritage.⁷ In the 1994 conference, Mme Françoise Choay presented a paper⁸ where she gave a critical analysis of the concept of authenticity and its use in relation to the conservation of cultural heritage. She referred to the division by Alois Riegl of the built heritage into 'monuments', intended as memorials erected on purpose to carry the memory of a person or an event, and 'historic monuments', which were recognised for their historical values by subsequent generations and protected as such.⁹ She then stated that the memorials have existed in all cultures, and therefore can be seen historically to represent a 'universal', while the notion of 'historic monument' was a relatively recent product of the European culture, and thus not universal, except that European culture came to be accepted by the entire world. Consequently, the resulting

5 M. Schneider, Glenn Gould, piano solo. Torino: Einaudi, 1991; G. Gould, *L'ala del turbine intelligente: scritti sulla musica*. Milano: Adelphi, 1988.

6 http://www.international.icomos.org/naradoc_eng.htm (5.11.2009).

7 UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, Nara Conference on Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention, Nara, Japan, 1-6 November 1994. Ed. K.-E. Larsen. Trondheim: Tapir, 1995.

8 F. Choay, Sept propositions sur le concept d'authenticité et son usage dans les pratiques du patrimoine historique. – UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, Nara Conference on Authenticity, pp. 101–120.

9 Riegl used the German expressions *gewollte Denkmale* and *ungewollte Denkmale*; Mme Choay used the French terms *monuments* and *monuments historiques*.

concept of 'authenticity' associated with the historic monument could not be accepted as being of 'universal value'. Basically, it could only be used as a preventive tool. Indeed, she concluded, it could 'have a use, practical and preventive, but only through its antithesis, inauthenticity, in the case of frauds or deliberate copies'.¹⁰

Furthermore, Mme Choay gave the example of the Japanese Shinto shrine area at Ise, which has become a symbol of rebuilding (about every 20 years) as part of its cultural continuity. The principal shrines of Ise were again rebuilt in 1994. She stated that this continuity has also made it possible to retain the original 'monument concept' as a 'living carrier of memory'. However, she did note that one of the workers on the recent reconstruction had complained of not having permission to use his creativity, being obliged to make an exact replica. Compared to the Ise Shrine, the Parthenon of Athens is a dead monument, which has already lost its monument significance. Indeed, Choay claimed that modern society is now unable to build memorials with real monument significance. She concluded: 'In short, the built heritage concerns now, as a question of priority, apparently with the same urgency, the living memory of all people. And, in relation to heritage, it is only this that could render a legitimate use to the concept of authenticity.'¹¹

The forty specialists invited to the 1994 Nara Conference represented many different cultural regions of the world. The keynote speakers represented UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS, and the main papers were presented by specialists from France, the UK, Germany, Italy, Kenya, New Zealand, Japan, Spain, Hungary, the Netherlands and Peru. The chairpersons and rapporteurs were from Japan, Sri Lanka, Canada, Belgium, Norway, Germany, Thailand, Tunisia, Finland, Australia and the UK. Therefore this multicultural group was fairly representative, and able to bring into the discussion issues that were relevant to the different cultural regions. The importance of the *Nara Document on Authenticity*, adopted by the conference, can be seen a) in the recognition of cultural diversity and of heritage diversity, and b) in the identification of the parameters for the definition of the notion of authenticity:

Art. 5. The diversity of cultures and heritage in our world is an irreplaceable source of spiritual and intellectual richness for all humankind. The protection and enhancement of cultural and heritage diversity in our world should be actively promoted as an essential aspect of human development.

Art. 6. Cultural heritage diversity exists in time and space, and demands respect for other cultures and all aspects of their belief systems. In cases where cultural values appear to be in conflict, respect for cultural diversity demands acknowledgement of the legitimacy of the cultural values of all parties.

Art. 7. All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression which constitute their heritage, and these should be respected.

¹⁰ F. Choay, Sept propositions, p. 105: «Cependant, la notion d'authenticité pourrait avoir une utilité, pratique, préventive, mais uniquement par le truchement de son antithèse, l'inauthenticité, dans le case de faux ou de copies délibérés.»

¹¹ F. Choay, Sept propositions, p. 118: «En un mot, le patrimoine historique bâti concerne désormais en priorité semblement et avec la même urgence, la mémoire vivante de tous les peuples. Et c'est elle seule qui, en matière patrimoniale, pourrait rendre un usage légitime à la notion d'authenticité.»

Art. 9. Conservation of cultural heritage in all its forms and historical periods is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage. Our ability to understand these values depends, in part, on the degree to which information sources about these values may be understood as credible or truthful. Knowledge and understanding of these sources of information, in relation to original and subsequent characteristics of the cultural heritage, and their meaning, is a requisite basis for assessing all aspects of authenticity.

Art. 13. Depending on the nature of the cultural heritage, its cultural context, and its evolution through time, authenticity judgements may be linked to the worth of a great variety of sources of information. Aspects of the sources may include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors. The use of these sources permits elaboration of the specific artistic, historic, social, and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage being examined.

The 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity was called a ‘document’ because the aim was to find a ‘low-profile’ word, and because words such as ‘charter’, ‘declaration’ or ‘recommendation’ seemed too pretentious. The aim of the Document was to allow for the recognition of different cultural traditions as heritage, playing down ethnocentric policies. The idea of authenticity was related to the verification of the sources of information as credible or truthful. It should be noted that the sources of information may vary greatly from one case to another, as well as from one culture to another. For example, in an ancient historical monument, such as the Parthenon of Athens, the sources of information would be fundamentally based on the material authenticity, while in the case of the Ise Shrine, these would be based more on cultural continuity, and thus on the immaterial aspects of the heritage. In either case, however, the sources of information have to be identified as a synthesis resulting from a historical-critical assessment of the heritage resource within its physical and cultural context. It is also noted that, even though the sources of information may vary, the notion of authenticity should remain constant.

The contraposition of the two types of heritage, to use Mme Choay’s definition, ‘monument’ and ‘historic monument’, is not easy either, as was evident in the debates in the 1994 Nara Conference and again in 2004. Indeed, the Yamato Declaration resulting from the latter conference clearly maintains a distance between tangible and intangible cultural heritage, for example regarding the notion of ‘authenticity’, the Declaration states: ‘further considering that intangible cultural heritage is constantly recreated, the term “authenticity” as applied to tangible cultural heritage is not relevant when identifying and safeguarding intangible cultural heritage’.¹² The idea of cultural diversity was later taken by UNESCO as the basis for the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (UNESCO, 2001):

Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind. As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for

¹² Yamato Declaration on Integrated Approaches for Safeguarding Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage (paragraph 8).

humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognised and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.¹³

In Japan, the current law on the protection of cultural heritage recognises living traditions and intangible cultural heritage. It is possible to pay subsidies to individuals or groups of individuals who have the knowledge and skills to transmit intangible cultural heritage, folk cultural properties and techniques to succeeding generations.¹⁴ It is required that the traditional knowledge and skills be transmitted exactly as they have been learnt. However, it is also accepted that, in the implementation, the individual craftsman may use his/her creative capacity, and not simply prepare a replica. Therefore, there is a certain similarity in the relationship between the composer preparing the musical score, and the musician interpreting the piece. The question can obviously be raised regarding distinguishing between the score as the main reference, and acceptable creativity in interpretation. Within what limits does the music of Bach or Brahms still retain its authenticity as music by Bach or Brahms, and when does it become 'inauthentic'? How do you distinguish between the notion of authenticity as it relates to 'the continuity of the living monument significance' and as it relates to 'the preservation of an historic monument'?

When Cesare Brandi examines the nature of the Italian Renaissance of the 15th century, he sees it as fundamentally different if compared to the 19th-century revivals in Europe.¹⁵ In the former case, the elements of Classical architecture became a reference for the development of a new architectural language, while in the latter case the historic styles were used as clichés in contemporary building. This latter attitude was also reflected in the practice of stylistic restoration, which was strongly criticised by people who regretted the loss of original fabric, and the modernisation and falsification of historic buildings and towns. In this regard, John Ruskin wrote:

Neither by the public, nor by those who have the care of public monuments, is the true meaning of the word restoration understood. It means the most total destruction out of which no remnants can be gathered: a destruction accompanied with false description of the thing destroyed. [...] What copying can there be of surfaces that have been worn half an inch down? The whole finish of the work was in the half inch that is gone; if you attempt to restore that finish, you do it conjecturally; if you copy what is left, granting fidelity to be possible [...] how is the new work better than the old? There was yet in the old some life, some mysterious suggestion of what it had been, and of what it had lost: some sweetness in the gentle lines which rain and sun had wrought.¹⁶

Ruskin condemned 'restoration' because it generally meant the loss of earlier features, often resulting in a dead and meaningless copy of a formerly living monument. However, it is interesting that he appreciated the reconstructed basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls, in Rome. 'It is a restored building, but nobly and faithfully done;

13 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001271/127160m.pdf> (5.11.2009).

14 An Overview of Japan's Policies on the Protection of Cultural Properties. Tokyo: Agency for Cultural Affairs, 1998.

15 C. Brandi, *Arcadico della Scultura. Eliante o dell'Architettura*. Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1992. See also: C. Brandi, *Le due vie*. Bari: Laterza, 1966 (French translation by P. Philippot: C. Brandi, *Les deux voies de la critique*, Brussels: Marc Vokar, 1989).

16 J. Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. First edition: 1849, ref. edition London: George Allen & Unwin, 1925, pp. 353–354.

and, so far as I know, the grandest interior in Europe.¹⁷ This Early-Christian church was badly destroyed by fire in 1823; the reconstruction was initiated by Pasquale Belli in 1831 and completed by Luigi Poletti in 1869. The remaining original parts were kept, and the main nave was rebuilt, by and large as a replica, but with a reinterpretation of the finishes.¹⁸

The idea of integrating creativity and conservation has been expressed by various modern theorists. For example, Renato Bonelli, who was professor of restoration at the Rome University La Sapienza, defined 'restoration' as 'a critical process, and then a creative act, the one as an intrinsic premise of the other'.¹⁹ This statement by Bonelli has provoked some misunderstandings, and not everybody (at least in Italy) necessarily agrees with him. Such misunderstandings may, however, be partly caused by other aspects of his thinking. Nevertheless, the idea of creativity continues to be part of the debates on modern restoration theory. At times, creativity may be rejected in favour of 'pure conservation'; in other cases, it may be taken to an extreme with the invention of new forms referring to traditional architectural language. Both cases may well be acceptable, subject to the character and qualities of the heritage resource concerned.

In his theory of restoration, Cesare Brandi has stressed that the fundamental idea of modern restoration of works of art must be in the recognition of a work of art as a work of art: 'Restoration consists of the methodological moment in which the work of art is recognised, in its physical being, and in its dual aesthetic and historical nature, in view of its transmission to the future.'²⁰ Indeed, Brandi considers a work of art to be a special product of humanity. This approach can also be connected to the ideas of Nietzsche, when he proposed that a human being, in modern society, can only generate values if these are grounded in a creative process. Such a creative process has been defined by various thinkers, such as Cesare Brandi himself, but also by Walter Benjamin and Martin Heidegger.²¹ It is through the creative process that man can produce an authentic work. While Brandi was basically referring to works of art, his ideas can be applied to other creative products as well. Indeed, the question can be raised: under what conditions would restoration be 'a creative act' as claimed by Bonelli? And, how can we meet the requirement by Mme Choay to retain the authenticity of a monument if at all possible?

17 J. Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, III, 10, fn., p. 80.

18 J. Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999, p. 165.

19 R. Bonelli, *Architettura e restauro*, Venice: s. e., 1959, p. 13; ref. in J. Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, p. 227, 244.

20 C. Brandi, *Teoria del restauro*, 1963; ref. C. Brandi, *Theory of Restoration*, Florence: Nardini, 2005, p. 48.

21 J. Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation*, pp. 213 ff.

Aspects of authenticity

The World Heritage Committee has adopted two documents that refer to authenticity: the Venice Charter of 1964 and the Nara Document on Authenticity of 1994. The first paragraph of the Preface²² of the Venice Charter states:

*Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions. People are becoming more and more conscious of the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a common heritage. The common responsibility to safeguard them for future generations is recognised. It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity.*²³

The World Heritage Convention of 1972 has been instrumental in generating awareness of heritage diversity, and building up attitudes and policies to safeguard such resources. Initially, in the Convention itself, cultural heritage was defined as ‘monuments’, ‘groups of buildings’, and ‘sites’. Later, the World Heritage Committee elaborated these definitions, introducing more details into the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, a document that is frequently updated, based on the requirements observed by the Committee.²⁴ Thus, the notion of ‘group of buildings’ now includes historic towns and town centres, and the notion of ‘site’ also includes cultural landscapes, heritage canals and heritage routes. In addition to meeting the specified criteria for inscription on the World Heritage List, cultural properties must also meet the conditions of authenticity and integrity. The latter is required for natural properties as well.

As noted above, the World Heritage Committee has adopted the *Nara Document on Authenticity*, which is also included in the Operational Guidelines. It is recommended that the different aspects of authenticity be examined on this basis. However, it is also possible to group them under three aspects, considering the specific artistic, historic, social and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage resource:²⁵

- **Authenticity by creation** refers to the creative process, as discussed above. One can here make reference to the definition of authenticity offered by Paul Philippot, Director Emeritus of ICCROM: ‘the authenticity of a work of art is in the internal unity of the mental process and of the material realization of the work.’²⁶ This aspect of authenticity refers to form and design, but also to materials, location and setting. It is noted that architecture is normally built to meet the requirements of a programme; therefore, use and function are implicitly to be considered.

- **Historical-material authenticity** is fundamentally based on the recognition of the historicity of the built heritage. This is the basic reference when dealing with built

22 The Venice Charter was prepared by a working group chaired by Pietro Gazzola, with Raymond Lemaire as rapporteur. The preface was written by Paul Philippot, then Deputy Director of the Rome Centre (now ICCROM), and the paragraphs that followed were written by Lemaire. The original text was in French, later translated into English at UNESCO.

23 http://www.icomos.org/venice_charter.html (5.11.2009).

24 See <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines> for earlier and current versions of the guidelines.

25 J. Jokilehto, Considerations on Authenticity and Integrity in World Heritage Context. – New Views on Authenticity and Integrity in the World Heritage of the Americas, San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, August 24–26, 2005. ICOMOS Monuments and Sites XIII. Ed. F.J. López Morales. Paris, 2005, pp. 35–48.

26 J. Jokilehto, Considerations on Authenticity, p. 42.

heritage. It refers especially to materials, substance, location and setting, but also to traditions and techniques, use and function, considered in the historical perspective.

- **Social-cultural authenticity** is relevant particularly when cultural traditions are continued. Therefore, it should be considered especially when dealing with sites such as the Ise Shrine, or vernacular villages, or cultural landscapes. This aspect of authenticity refers to the intangible aspects of heritage, such as use and function, traditions and techniques, spirit and feeling, considered particularly in reference to traditional continuity.

In his theory of restoration, Brandi has observed that ‘a fake is not a fake until it is recognised as such. Indeed, falsity cannot be considered as an inherent property of the object. Even in the extreme case where the fakery mainly consists of a different material composition – as with coins – there may be falsity in comparison to the alloy used for authentic coins, but the different alloy is not false in itself: it is genuine. [---] Thus, falsity is based on judgement.’²⁷ Brandi further notes that differentiating between copies, imitations and falsifications is not based on the production methods, but rather on the intent. He cites three situations: 1) production of an object that is similar to another object with the intent to document; 2) production of such an object with the specific intention to mislead others as to its period, its material nature or its creator; and 3) marketing or otherwise circulating an object as an authentic work of a period, material, production or artist that differ from those pertaining to the object itself.²⁸ This shows that the object, per se, is not a fake. It only becomes such if someone wants to present it as such.

Taking a look at archaeological sites in particular, Troy Lovata, Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico, has examined and articulated the problems of inauthentic archaeologies.²⁹ The first case presented by Lovata is a straightforward fraud, where someone has either modified existing evidence in order to pretend to represent, for example, an older phase of development, or has placed original evidence in a wrong context. Lovata emphasises that the judgement of authenticity or inauthenticity is fundamentally context-dependent. He notes that archaeologists are not just technicians who merely record data: ‘Finds must be understood and interpreted in relation to past, current and future contexts. Methodologies change because ways of understanding change.’³⁰ He further observes that the meaning and value of an object, even if it is ‘inauthentic’, a copy or a replica, will depend on public perception. Lovata refers to some thinkers, such as William Lipe,³¹ who have claimed that visitors can have a meaningful experience when they are looking at reproductions or reconstructions, which normally should be labelled as such. The interesting points that Lovata introduces are related particularly to context-dependency, i.e. the need

27 C. Brandi, *Theory of Restoration*, p. 87 (‘Falsification’).

28 C. Brandi, *Theory of Restoration*, p. 87.

29 T. Lovata, *Inauthentic Archaeologies: Public Uses and Abuses of the Past*. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2006.

30 T. Lovata, *Inauthentic Archaeologies*, p. 13.

31 W. Lipe, *Public Benefits of Archaeological Research*. – *Public Benefits of Archaeology*. Ed. B. Little. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002, pp. 20–28.

to clearly define and understand the context in relation to which authenticity and inauthenticity are assessed.

Lovata also makes reference to Walter Benjamin, who has drawn a clear line separating an original work of art, with its 'aura', from a copy.³² Benjamin observes that authenticity is a relatively recent acquisition, and he notes that, for example, a medieval image of the Madonna was not considered 'authentic' in its time; it only became authentic during succeeding centuries. Originally art was integrated into the fabric of a tradition, where it found its expression in a cult. 'We know that the earliest art works originated in the service of a ritual – first the magical, then the religious kind. It is significant that the existence of the work of art with reference to its aura is never entirely separated from its ritual function. In other words, the unique value of the "authentic" work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value.'³³ This can also be referred back to what was said above about Choay's paper at the Nara conference. Benjamin further claims that, in principle, a work of art has always been reproducible; man-made artefacts have always been imitated by man. Replicas were also made by pupils as part of a learning process. However, mechanical reproduction, in his view, presents a new situation. Even though an object can be mechanically reproduced, authenticity cannot.

When it is a question of verifying the authenticity of a work of art or an ancient monument, the task is relatively straightforward – though not necessarily always easy. However, when larger areas are recognised as heritage, such as cultural landscapes, the issues are further complicated. In the World Heritage context, there is the requirement not only of verifying the authenticity but also the integrity of a property. The relationships and dynamic functions present in cultural landscapes, historic towns or other living properties, and essential to their distinctive character, need to be taken into account and maintained. Cultural landscapes are defined as the 'combined works of nature and of man'. 'They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal.'³⁴ Cultural landscapes can be designed or organically grown; they can be either relic landscapes or living and continuing landscapes. They can also be associated cultural landscapes, such as sacred mountains, which do not necessarily have any man-made structures. UNESCO is also preparing a new international recommendation concerning the safeguarding of the historic urban landscape, aimed at the definition and management of protected urban areas within their larger settings. In defining the integrity of such properties, it is generally useful to start by identifying the functions and/or design concepts that have characterised them over time. Such elements will include the spatial structure of the property, as well as the dynamic relationships of the various parts to the whole, and

32 W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. – W. Benjamin, *Illuminations*. London: Fontana-Collins, 1979, pp. 219–253.

33 W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art*, pp. 225–226.

34 Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, 2008, annex 3 <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide08-en.pdf> (5.11.2009).

the overall visual integrity of the territory within its context. Once such elements have been identified as sources of information, it is possible to verify their authenticity.

The definition of cultural heritage continued to broaden over the second half of the 20th century. And this process is not complete by any means. The Council of Europe's *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (2005),³⁵ the 'Faro Convention', defines cultural heritage broadly as 'a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time' (article 2). Even though the word 'authentic' is not mentioned in the document, the concept is intrinsically present in the recommendations. At the same time, the purpose is not to insist on static preservation, but rather to promote an integrated approach that aims to achieve a balance between different elements, cultural and natural, and to reinforce social cohesion by fostering a sense of shared responsibility for places where people live. This framework convention encourages the sustainable use of heritage, and promotes 'respect for the integrity of the cultural heritage by ensuring that decisions about change include an understanding of the cultural values involved' (article 9).

The notion of 'authenticity' is many-faceted, and the present paper can only give some highlights, including hints on the on-going international debate. During the second half of the twentieth century, the definition of what was considered heritage completely changed. Today, the entire environment has been historicised. As a result, cultural heritage is no longer an isolated phenomenon; instead, it is a holistic concept, which involves the everyday life of people from a great variety of traditions. Consequently, the defining of heritage and the identification of meaningful sources of information are not easy tasks. Regarding the notion of authenticity, an easy way out would be to allow each culture to provide its own definition. So, Europeans could keep their definitions, while Africans, Asians and Americans could elaborate theirs. However, this would result in complete anarchy, and would destroy the entire basis of international collaboration, which has been accepted as part of our present-day culture. It is therefore crucial to find a common denominator which focuses on the essential features of the notion, but also provides the necessary 'flexibility' to take into account the qualities and specificity of each case. This requirement is not only relevant to authenticity but also to modern restoration theory. Basically, common ground can be established in a critical methodology. In the case of authenticity, therefore, the 1994 Nara Document insisted on the identification of the sources of information, rather than giving a fixed list of attributes, as was proposed by some at the time. However, it can be noted that the conservation of cultural heritage is fundamentally a cultural problem, and living cultures and cultural traditions are in constant evolution. Therefore, the issue of authenticity will remain open, and one needs to return to it as part of on-going policy debates.

35 <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/199.htm> (5.11.2009).