

MONUMENTS AND IDEOLOGIES*

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To the memory of Albert Leixner

There exist two fundamental answers, although only distinguishable instrumentally, to the question of the origin of the cult of historical monuments: an anthropological and a historical one. According to the former, respect for the relics of the past derives from human nature, from man's consciousness having generated not only memory, but also fear, and thereby also the need for self-identification by seeking support in the past. In this regard, the cult of relics of the past have accompanied man "since time beyond the mind". It is a modern form of ancestral worship. Monuments are modern fetishes with magic powers able to set up and protect social identity. According to the latter — the historical explanation — the cult of historical monuments is a relatively young historical phenomenon, a creation of 18th and 19th century historicism, when the cult of monuments came to be an explicit ideological programme. Relics of the past began to be considered not only worthy of adoration, but also of protection. As a consequence the cult of historical monuments became institutionalized. It is apparent that the two explanations are not mutually exclusive and they can easily be differentiated as two concepts of the monument in the broader and a narrower senses of the term. The explicit, institutionalized and specialized cult of monuments can be regarded as a modern variation of the anthropological worship of ancestors, as a typically bourgeois, secularized form of the cult of relics. However, within the framework of the historical answer, according to which the cult of monuments is a unique historical phenomenon brought about by unique historical causes (including, alongside historicism and nationalism, reactions to the ruthlessness of industrialism and, in the case of the bourgeoisie, its characteristic bias for science and specialization), two different interpretations of this historicity may be recognized: the first might be termed "progressiv-

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ist". In the footsteps of Hegel's conception of development as progress as an unavoidable and irreversible process progressing from ignorance to self-consciousness, from suppression to emancipation, the history of the monument idea is apprehended as a transition from a prescientific stage, to a final (and present-day) scientific stage. This process is understood as taking a definitive recognition of the autonomous value of historical monuments, out of which results the necessary obligations for their protection. A logical consequence of this conception is the reliance on the possibility of setting up the care of monuments as a scientific discipline — purely a gnoseological and objective one. Its mission should be to gather, deepen and systematize knowledge of the objective principles functioning in the domain of conservation and to supervise their implementation. From this point of view, mistakes and deficiencies derive either from a lack of knowledge and unfamiliarity, or from ignorance and barbarity. Paradoxically, this conception not only absolutizes the present, conceding to future development the sole right to improve and complete the present, but also it comprehends science as a kind of dogmatism thus considering future knowledge only as a variant, a quantitative deepening of appropriate items of knowledge. Last but not least, paradoxical is also the fact that an unquestionable fruit of relativism — a preservation doctrine of monument protection — is here regarded as an objective knowledge and an indisputable norm.

At the opposite pole stands a relativistic interpretation of the historicity of the monument concept. In this view, the cult of monuments underwent far more numerous and deeper changes than that of their progress from a prescientific to a scientific stage. The history of the monument idea does not appear as a transition from ignorance to wisdom, from subjection to autonomy, but as part of the permanent struggle of ideas whose end remains open. No conception, including our own, of a monument and its protection is, according to this interpretation, definitive. It is an objectification of the world outlook (*Weltanschauung*), an incorporation of a very definite axiology, because it maintains a complementary relationship with contemporary art and because it is one of the main instruments of ideology, a means of ideologizing very definite interests.

Relics of the past have not come to be valuable in themselves and not for purely anthropological reasons. They were recognized as valuable only when a particular time in history began to feel a need for them for very concrete reasons. The cult of historical monuments starts with a whole set of normatives in which the history of the monument idea may be considered as a permanent struggle of normativism with relativism. From the past, that part is selected, which is of importance to the present, and which corresponds with its values and intentions. This selection from the past is then presented as an ideal, whereby a twofold aim is achieved: contemporary artistic production is influenced and indoctrinated and as a consequence the present cultural intention is secretly legitimated

(absolutized). The selected past is understood as a model for imitation, the notion is created of a connection between present and that of the selected, ideal past. Since this model art of the past is considered to constitute the very essence of art, then to adhere to it, imitate it, identify oneself with it means to apply for a share in the substance of artistic creativity. This historical argumentation was created to justify one's contemporary claims. Such a form of historical normativism is to be found not only in the Renaissance cult of ancient monuments, which were considered worthy of collection and which served as models and legitimations of Renaissance anthropocentrism and individualism, but also in the Classicism and the Empire period. However, in the Renaissance ancient models were guides which could be overcome. In Classicism, ancient models stood as witnesses of a lost paradise to which one could only come closer. If in the Renaissance ancient monuments were models of anthropocentrism, in Classicism they are regarded as expressions of a democratic organization of society, ideals worthy of imitation. Ancient monuments acquire not only the status of historical arguments in favour of the bourgeoisie's claims to power, but also the character of indirect political agitations in favour of its ideals. It was precisely the history of art (Vasari, Winckelmann) that played a considerable role in establishing the concept of an underlying connection between the present and a selected past, in creating the illusion of the direct participation of the past in the present.

At the moment of a direct physical struggle for power the bourgeoisie adopted a way of behaviour toward relics of the past which differed from the one it pursued when justifying its claims. It continued to preserve a division of the past into positive and negative one; however, towards the latter it adopted an openly iconoclastic way of behaviour. The revolutionary bourgeoisie began to look upon mediaeval art as a direct instrument of ecclesiastical ideological stultification and thus favoured the demolition of mediaeval cathedrals. In this connection it is not surprising that the bourgeoisie took a stand for an explicit protective programme towards monuments of the Ancients (by establishing up museums). What is surprising, however, that it did not turn its iconoclastic wrath against modern monuments, against the direct expression of the ideology of its feudal antagonist. An explanation is, in this case, not hard to come by the bourgeoisie regarded Baroque and Rococo works as a kind of property, rare objects and adornments, the property which should be appropriated from the preceding ruling class — not irrationally destroyed.

It is well known that Napoleon, by his aggressive incursions, discredited the enlightenment idea of universality, plunging it into suspicion with masked imperialism and provoking resistance in the form of nationalist movements. But he also cast doubt upon the validity and reliability of the bourgeois ideal of antiquity. Exploiting the imperial (Roman) version of the ideal, he drew atten-

tion to the ambiguity in its symbolic value and forced the national bourgeoisie to seek their historical support quite outside the domain of the classical ideal. However, what was still at stake was finding the ideal and model past, and by taking support in it, one is able through its medium to legitimize one's right to national autonomy. Paradoxically, this support was found in that selected past which had only until that time symbolized feudal ideological oppression — in the art of the Middle Ages. Mediaeval (primarily architectonic) monuments came to be symbols of national creativity, expressions of the nation's spirit. However, following defeated revolutions, it was not granted to the national bourgeoisie, author of the national myth, to become the first practitioner of the programme of the protection of national monuments. This protection, actualized in the Napoleonic wars, was initiated under the signature of restored feudalism, on the initiative of feudal rulers. The consensus regarding the choice of the Middle Ages as the selected model past, in which bourgeois nationalism saw eye to eye with feudal clericalism, represented the historical compromise of an unsuccessful bourgeoisie with the triumphant aristocracy. It combines within it a pessimistic sentiment, an escape into an idealized past with pompous celebrations of the restoration of a feudal past and its Christian core. This inner duality of the above historical compromise is reflected both in the apprehension of monuments, and in the doctrine of their protection. Coming to the forefront is the significance of monuments as documents, documents of a nation's glorious past. Nonetheless, this documentary-historical significance is, at the same time, inseparably connected with the apprehension of monuments as religious relics. Hence, in the final analysis they are understood as national relics, relics of a new religion — that of a national myth. However, monuments also preserve further the significance of historical models or ideals, worthy of imitation. The unity between a model past and the present has not been disrupted, the concept of the unity of the cult of monuments and contemporary artistic production is still valid. It is manifest, on the one hand, in the doctrine of monument restoration and on the other, in artistic revival movements. The aim in view is to create the illusion of the direct presence of the model past — and what is more, in its ideal, perfect form. In the case of monument care, this means to restorate that part of the past which is considered to be the most important, purifying it from less important deposits and reconstructing it to its greatest possible completeness. Efforts for a perfect revitalization of an allegedly original past, as well as for an improvement of the past, were not motivated by a simple romantic escape, but paradoxically, by such bourgeois gains as were science (in this case art historical investigation) and technological progress. Viollet-le-Duc was convinced that he was precisely aware not only of what the Gothic intended to achieve, what it wished to look like, but also that 19th century industrial technology was able to realize what the Middle Ages had only vainly striven for. Mediaeval monu-

ments, perfected by engineer-architects, thus became not only constructs of romantic sentimentalism, but simultaneously also paradoxical specimens of technological progress. The difference between monuments and new artistic formations, between monument reconstructions and historicizing constructions, between representation and function, became effaced. Just as bourgeois pragmatism had been forced to conceal itself behind aristocratic representation, so also functionality was obliged to hide behind historical ornament. The difference between historical monuments and contemporary artistic production was effaced on the outside precisely in the same way as that between the feudal past and the industrial present. The same harmony was feigned as between the political power of restored aristocracy and the economic power of the defeated bourgeoisie. However, this feigned unity of utilitarianism and representation was in fact a strained antinomy which in time became incapable of concealing its cracks. The first among them to break through was liberalism. The idea of free competition became projected into historical pluralism. Instead of the selected, ideal past, the scene was taken up by pluralism of the pasts that were worth being preserved and imitated — plurality of artistic revivals. Historical normativism was supplanted by utilitarianism: monuments ceased to be national relics, they became historical documents, sources of a scientific historical knowledge. At this moment art historians enter the scene of monument protection, try to make it into a part of the history of art. They replace priests and architects. True, historical styles remain models to be imitated, but solely as a plurality of symbols of various functions out of which the utilitarianism of the new production will choose for itself according to the aim it has in view. These changes — overcoming normativism with historical pluralism and nationalism with utilitarianism or replacing a symbolico-relic understanding of monuments by their historico-documentary apprehension, i.e. making monument care into a scientific branch — became projected into a doctrine of monument protection only at the moment when modern art intervened in this process with its ideas of autonomy and cosmopolitanism. Impressionism opened eyes to the rehabilitation of the Baroque and thus radicalized historical relativism. Monuments as such became understood as historically relative values and even as made up of the plurality of mutually heterogeneous, competitive and many a time even antinomic secondary values (Riegl). In virtue of the idea of equality of all historical phenomena, the restoration doctrine, monument purism and reconstructionism became impossible. Its place was taken up by a tolerant pluralistic doctrine of the preservation all historic layers of a work. Normative divisions made between more or less important periods of the past were refuted.

However, modernism did not joint this process simply as a deepening of pluralism. It did so primarily with a radical demand to stop the mixing up of the past and the present, truth and representation, function and ornament. It

required that colour be recognized, that an end be put to utilitarianism concealing behind a facade of disinterested ornamentalism. It called for "an art appropriate to its time". The programme advocating the incompatibility of the past with the present became reflected in the new position of monuments. A clear-cut delimitation was achieved in the sphere of monuments and also in new artistic production. As a result, monument protection and modern art, instead of being a mixed unity, became complementary elements indeed, yet with precisely separate functions. The protection of monuments came to be a complement to modern art, an equilibrium of modernism. But how is it that the self-reliant and even aggressive, future-oriented modernism has room left for monument protection, and that its implicit iconoclasm and antihistoricism have not swept away the cult of historical monuments at all?

The answer is to be sought in two salient elements of modernism: in its principle of artistic autonomy and in its permanent change. The relativity and "self-negation" of avant-garde-isms, together with the idea of art's autonomy weakened the anti-traditionalism, and anti-historicism of modernism, thus leading to historical pluralism: All monuments of art including works diametrically different were not only tolerated, but also protected. However, a condition for this protection has come to be a new understanding of historical monuments: primarily, they were understood as evidence for the history of art, as aesthetic documents, and testimonies of the immanent evolution of art, and in the final analysis of things, they were regarded even as autonomous works of art. Their symbolic or culture-documentary value ceased to be a voucher of their protection. Their status was legitimated by their artistic value alone. They became expressions or objectifications of human creativity generally, anthropologically-minded and therefore universally and permanently valid autonomous artistic values. Historical relativism together with monument protection regarded as a scientific activity led, on the one hand, to an enormous extension of the monument terrain and ultimately radically sharpened the conflict between the latent iconoclasm of utilitarianism and the inclination of historiography to protect all historical documents as important to scientific knowledge. Modernistic autonomism resulted, on the other hand, in a conception of monuments as solitary works. Since monuments were then understood as autonomous works of art, it was worth protecting only the most significant and the best among them. The aim of this protection was to maintain and preserve the aesthetic unity of works of art, to revitalise the artistic quality of historical monuments. The scientific and relativistic version of the doctrine of restoration has thus been replaced by its aesthetic version. It half-opened the back-door to subjectivism and a new normativism, but simultaneously, it took the first step towards a new conception of monuments — their apprehension as monument complexes. As a matter of fact, the aesthetic unity, the impression of artistic unification, could

not be reserved for solitary works, for selected peak specimens of the history of art. In that apprehension, monuments in fact acquired the status of museum exhibits. True, thereby their autonomy was strengthened, but at the same time this cast grave doubt on their living quality. Hence, the doctrine of the artistic unification and aesthetic appeal of historical monuments was extended to include also monument complexes made up not only of outstanding, but also of inferior works. The so-called "Ortsbilder" (panoramic pictures of monument complexes) had also entered the horizon of monument protection, although, as may be seen, the validity of their protection continued to be justified on the ground of aesthetic autonomy.

After the communist rise to power, the problem of historical monuments and their protection shifted on to an entirely new plane. If, in capitalist society the monument's principal enemy had been the private property and its interests, where every law pertaining to monuments inevitably undermined the egoism of the private sector and the sacred nature of private ownership. Under the communist regime, the monument's arch-enemy became the ideology. Rieg'l's hope that socialism would permit monument protection, failed to be fulfilled. Right from the beginning, monuments and the necessity of doing something with them proved an unwelcome burden and an ideological dilemma, difficult to solve for the communist regime. The relationship of communist power to cultural patrimony had, in principle, been resolved already by Lenin and Lunacharsky after the 1917 revolution. However, the snag lay right in the theoretical standpoint of communists towards the heritage of the ruling classes of the past. True, the contradiction regarding the attitude to be taken towards artistic relics of the former oppressors was resolved theoretically with the conception of two cultures — progressive and decadent. However, in practice, this conception, multiplied by a true lack of interest and a propensity for iconoclasm on the part of the new powers that be, resulted in unforeseeable damage. In the first stage following the communist take-over of power, the monument heritage was split into progressive, worthy of protection, and decadent, which need not be spared, but only according to the model of re-education of class enemies, should be exploited in a new way. A great number of monuments, primarily ecclesiastic, but also profane, fell prey to this semi-iconoclasm: numerous monasteries, and also manors were turned into old people's homes, caserns, granaries, and store-houses. The "re-functioning" of monuments of the past ruling classes represents an analogy to the reclamation of class enemies. But with an important paradox: the victims of communist iconoclasm were primarily the ecclesiastic monuments of pre-bourgeois, pre-capitalist, feudal periods. Communism claimed to be the heir of progressive traditions, therefore, it considered those monuments worthy of protection which cor-

responded with its self-stylization: Monuments of classical tradition — Renaissance profane art, and — paradoxically, but significantly — also bourgeois classicism, realism and naturalism. However, efforts to set itself off as the continuation of European rationalism was not the only motivation of this paradoxical protective and affirmative relation to the heritage precisely of that class from which communism had usurped power. An important role was played here by a phenomenon which is often repeated in the history of art: The new power appropriates not only estates and possessions, but also the attributes of the defeated power. During periods based on religious myths it was believed that also the power itself of the vanquished was thereby acquired. In the communist myth of the scientific nature of the new ideology, two further motivations were added to this: the first is normal human envy of the poor towards the rich and the resulting appropriation of their properties. The second one, and to my mind an important reason for taking over and even imitating art of the previous ruling class (socialist realism) was an effort to produce the impression that the fundamental gains of bourgeois democracy pass on, through continuity, into the communist society and go on developing further, on to a new, higher plane (the conception of a national cultural heritage, mixing up artistic monuments with idols of the new political power). And thus — in an endeavour to appear as a dialectical continuation of democratic traditions — communism pretended free elections, parliamentary pluralism... and also the protection of monuments. This imitation of the way of life, values and certain ideals of the previous ruling class, however, becomes a heavy burden for communism: It is true on the one hand, that the pretence of realism, rationalism and democracy helps to mask the true antidemocratic, irrational and iconoclastic face of communism. On the other hand, however, this burden of feigning required a considerable investment and suppression of its own nature. This contradiction became also reflected in relation to monuments. In the second stage of communist dictatorships — after 1956 — the doctrine of two cultures was dropped, monuments ceased to be classified into progressive, and worthy of protection, or reactionary, worthy of “re-education” or finally to be left to decay. The whole history of art was taken under protection, the conception of an anthropological essence and the national character of the entire cultural heritage was accepted. Nonetheless, there was hardly any change as regards the essential contradictory attitude of communism towards the cultural and artistic heritage. The political powers felt it as an unpleasant burden which — in view of the party’s own ideological principles and shammed illusions — must somehow be taken care of. Being thus caught in the trap of its own ideological sham and deceit, the communist power had to take patronage over at least a minimum protection of monuments of art. The communist iconoclasm was thus mitigated

and changed into a hardly veiled indifference and cynism on the part of administrative functionaries. The protection of monuments became a permanent apple of discord on the part of the culturally cynical organs of state and political power, on the one hand, and conservationists, originating, for the most part, from the middle classes and consequently possessing an inherited positive, Samaritan relation to the monument heritage, on the other. However, as for Slovakia, another factor came to join this game, one that deepened the general indifference towards monuments, decided their fate and resulted in the present-day devastation of monuments: That specific factor was and still is the extremely rapid industrialization of Slovakia, a country essentially agrarian even after World War II. This process of a shortened, "condensed catching up" with western industrialism was truly realized only quantitatively, by the number of factories (with great ecological consequences, which are to be seen only today). However, the process mentioned above failed to assert itself in the mentality of the people, educated for whole generations in precapitalist cultural traditions. This became unequivocally apparent in an absence of a historical consciousness in the society at large, on the one side, and in a short-sighted technocratism and economism ("Americanism"), on the other. Iconoclasm and cultural indifference on the part of the communist political power towards the cultural artistic past were thus safely camouflaged and many a time fed and nurtured by the cultural-historical indifference of the common citizen. But what is perhaps the direct consequence of the absence of a cultural-historical consciousness is that it was directly supported by the technocratic intelligentsia, which took over from bourgeois civilization, for the most part, only its pragmatism and utilitarianism. And it is precisely this tandem of ideological and technocratic cynicism that bears the responsibility for most of the destructive interventions into the aching body of our monument patrimony. The pitiful image of our towns, so rich in monuments of art, however, is not uniquely the outcome of ideological deformations. Narrow-minded technocratism, short-sighted utilitarianism, an absence of a cultural-historical consciousness, lack of education, cultural indifference, cynicism, and all that became such a negative factor (all paradoxically in relation to Riegl's trust in socialism) precisely because of the essential fallibility of one of the basic principles of the communist doctrine, viz. the unnatural, utopian concept of the collective, universal State ownership. Anonymous ownership means ownership by nobody — according to the popular adage, "what is everybody's is nobody's". As we know, State ownership leads to collective indifference and cynicism, on the one hand, and to the pilfering and embezzlement by some individuals and groups, on the other. Communist totalitarianism revealed itself precisely in this, as nontotalitarian, or to be more exact, as a totality, which was but an instrument for a quiet group misappropriating and misusing common property. And this, egoistically utilized, appropriated totality

brought about a chronic crisis in monument protection precisely because it sided with the cultural cynicism of those groups which exploited ideological and economical totality as an instrument for promoting their own group interests. As has already been observed, they were not only groups of the ideological or political power: Monuments with no owner, and under the supervision of an indifferent and uncultured manager, could only go to waste.

But following this aside, let us go back to the metamorphoses of monument doctrines.

The idea of monument complexes again became of topical interest in the sixties and this time was justified purely on theoretical grounds — by the argument of the theory of systems. It was then not so much making contact with the aesthetic conception, as it was an attempt to enforce and extend — by means of an improved theoretical argumentation — the concept born in the middle of our century, e.g. the concept of the so-called town reservations. This, however, came into being within the context of the first radical criticism of modernism — in the wake of totalitarian neoclassicism — in the fifties. As has already been intimated, the past was at that time split into one worthy and one unworthy of protection. Protection in turn came to be interpreted as an extraction of a model past and its purification from inferior deposits. The ideal past was again considered to be worthy of imitation, contemporary artistic production (socialist realism) again overlapped with monument protection. The search for monuments as documents of the national past again came into vogue. It was precisely these endeavours to obtain the most perfect and the purest image of the national past gave birth to a neo-romantic concept of monument reservations. Nevertheless, before the neo-classicist normativism had time to assert itself, it was disrupted by its own internal dissensions. The communist promise of a material paradise on earth compelled the party to tolerate the idea of functionality, utility, technocracy. At that stage, narrow-minded economism stepped in with its inclination toward ahistorical iconoclasm and started to make decisions. The nationalist core of ideological normativism did not remove this iconoclasm, but together with it made a noteworthy tandem: in the domain of monument protection, technocratic and utilitarian iconoclasm shook hands with neo-romantic illusionism and reconstructivism. Thus, simultaneously with the demolition of entire monument zones, there grew neo-historical reconstructions, and in the midst of desolate, inhumane functionalism, a few solitary specimens of the glorious national past appeared as orphans. (The tragic side of it is that also some art historians assisted in this. This implies that the question of neo-romanticism cannot be explained through naiveté. It is related to the process of the subsequent self-awareness of the nation. It seems that certain stages in the cultural development cannot be skipped over.) However, this monument eclecticism is only seemingly related to postmodernism. In reality it

is a hybrid of utilitarian iconoclasm and neo-romanticism. In contrast to this, the postmodernist trend to eclecticism also in the monument conception is rather a radicalization of a historic-relativistic tolerance: Riegl's idea of relativity and plurality of monument values which found expression in the doctrine of conservation, is brought to its consequent end. Not only all the pasts and not only all the values are equivalent and worthy of protection; in certain cases, also various protective doctrines may have their justification, may be utilized, depending on the situation. No monument doctrine may claim the status of being uniquely right. All the more so, as the very identity of a monument — as far as its authenticity and the range of the monument sphere are concerned — has no fixed definitive contours or boundaries. Not only because it is in itself historical (historically multilayered and permanently changing), but also because it depends on our interpretation and also on such irrational factors as our axiologic hierarchy, our "Weltanschauung", our "taste", of which we are well aware that these are not in themselves static. In this relation none of us will take away the burden of the creative risk involved in making a decision about monument care.

We have stated that modernism has enforced, for the sake of sincerity ("To each period its art..."), a strict delimitation of the present from the past, a clear division between competencies of contemporary artistic production and the protection of monuments. Modernism believed that it would succeed in setting up a new and perfect world right from the beginning to the end. But precisely in this matter, in this pretentious, arrogant self-confidence, in its conviction of total independence from tradition and a long-standing and accumulated historical experience, it overreached itself. Avant-garde functionalism was incapable of providing an adequate replacement for the old human environment, being as it was formed by little steps of trial and error in a long-standing tradition. The notion of absolute creation, of the ability to set up a perfect human world, an organically functioning human environment *ex nihilo* — out of nothing — and this from "Alpha to Omega" of human needs, has revealed itself as an extreme utopia. Instead, it has only provided a monstrous, dehumanized world of totalitarian rationalism. It is logical that this failure should have resulted in a rehabilitation of tradition, in a humble acknowledgement of the wisdom of gradually acquired experience, in the wisdom of history. Naturally, this could not avoid touching on the relation to the material presence of the past, a relation to monuments permanently threatened by the futurism of the avant-gardes and by the utilitarianism of industrialism. However, this does not mean only the general acknowledgement of the irreplaceable value of the world of monuments. It means primarily an understanding that this world, long and patiently being formed, has the character of a whole, the character of a system. And what is more, that it is an organic part, a subsystem of a larger whole — the ecological system. The failure of utopian modernism has drawn attention

to the fact that monuments constitute a system which is a part of the global human environment. Every radical intervention into the historically-constituted system causes unforeseeable consequences, disturbs an equilibrium whose restitution will again require an extremely long process of patient trials and errors. Critics of the theory of systems reproached it as a concealed ideology or glorification of industrial society, an expression of the cult of the machine, and last but not least, for political radicalism — ignoring the unique nature of man and his world. Using the theory of the duality of history and nature, they protested against the dethroning of an anthropocentric humanism which began with Darwin's discovery of man's evolutionary appurtenance to nature, and continued through Freud's suspicion of an instinctive origin of rationality itself, and ended in Lorenz's and Popper's discovery of intelligence in the amoeba. The dualistic separation of man and nature ascribed historicity and uniqueness to the human world only and thereby argued in favour of the protective relationship to historic tradition. On the other hand, it ascribed to the world of nature a blind obedience to its laws, a pure reproduction of principles. From this serial repetition it concluded the frivolous premise of limitlessness, infinity and the valuelessness of nature. Nevertheless, that dualism failed similarly as did the avant-garde contraposition of the past and the present. If the failure of the avant-gardist utopia, of a world built up from zero, inevitably leads to the recognition of a system-like character of tradition, the threat of ecological disaster reveals the uniqueness of nature in all its nakedness. It is evident, on the one hand, that nature has its history, and that, on the other hand, historical tradition represents a system of experience. Both overlap, are interdependent, and both — monuments and the environment — need our protection. An enemy of this monument care is not solely short-sighted utilitarianism, and unsystematic thinking, but also the stupidity which feigns science. The ritual pretence of science non only substitutes incantation for problem-solving, but also helps to mask the arch-enemy — cynical egoism — and defends him from public and rational control.

It is true, the preservation of monuments is no science, nor can it become a science because it is part of our artistic and cultural life. Yet, monuments intrinsically need scientific concepts for their protection. Their protection needs the participation and involvement of all humanists, especially all historians, including those of art. However, if these are to lend effective help, they must have, besides wisdom, also social authority. But to obtain it, they must fight for it.

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