



From Technical Information to Heritage Meaning: A Simondonian Approach to Historical Objects, Ruins, and Collective Memory

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This paper explores the subjective relationship between historical heritage objects, ruins, and sites of memory, focusing on the processes through which they acquire cultural value and symbolic significance. While heritage studies often emphasize the historical, material, and institutional dimensions of cultural objects, this research investigates the dynamic interaction between human experience and heritage artifacts as a process of meaning production.

The theoretical framework is inspired by the philosophy of Gilbert Simondon, particularly his reflections on information, individuation, and the mode of existence of technical objects. Simondon conceived information not as a fixed content transmitted between entities but as an operation that emerges within a process of individuation. Building upon this perspective, the paper proposes a conceptual shift from the technical and scientific object to historical, artistic, and social objects. Heritage artifacts, ruins, and cultural landscapes are understood not as passive repositories of historical facts but as informational mediators that generate new relationships between individuals, communities, and collective memory.

Through this lens, the value of a historical object does not reside solely in its material authenticity or chronological age. Rather, value emerges through ongoing processes of interpretation, affective engagement, cultural transmission, and symbolic appropriation. Sites of memory become spaces where material traces and subjective experience intersect, producing forms of collective identity and cultural continuity. Ruins, in particular, reveal a privileged mode of heritage existence, where incompleteness and temporal stratification stimulate processes of cultural individuation and remembrance.

The paper argues that a Simondonian reinterpretation of heritage contributes to a broader understanding of eco-cultural landscapes and memory sites as relational systems in which natural, historical, and symbolic dimensions are continuously co-constituted. Such an approach provides new insights into the role of heritage in shaping collective identities and sustaining long-term human-environment relationships, while highlighting the active participation of communities in the ongoing production of cultural meaning.

