



# 'Culture, Heritage and Identity' by Marie-Theres Albert

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## Introduction

Concept for heritage had been changed a lot from its initial starting during the formation of UNESCO in year 1972. Now a day, the most significant idea about conserving heritage is 'identity'. The question of identity becomes more meaningful when our ascenders get these assets from us as a particular symbol with special functions. Heredity doesn't mean everything unless they do practice and such practices have to be able to inspire them to preserve heritage as a 'symbolic tissue'. The word tissue in fact referred to such kind of cohesion; which unifies individuals of any society with the burning question of its tranquility. Now, the recognized identity of culture is comprised of both physical and non-physical heritages. Such kind of phenomena were understood better right after the second world war when Europe got its long-cherished peace in its history. The writer took two examples of revenge, cities like Warsaw and Dresden, both paid immense cost of destruction to imply political ideology from two sides of a knife; and such attempts were done deliberately. But the author argued that such incidents are also part of human history that is still contextual. Why a society loses identity that had been developed for many years? One possibility is the visible remains of all these destructions. But the non-visible invading is more successful in this regard and colonization is the best example of such destruction for intangible heritages.

The writer goes for three illustrations for the contextual convenience: terracotta army of China, Buddha of Afghanistan and city palace in Berlin. Terracotta army might show us the desire to be immortal by a tyrant emperor and that was also down to dust later by the successor for his own desire to override his impact in history. Again, some may argue that Taliban of recent history destroyed Buddha statues in Bamiyan valley due to fundamentalism, but the real fact is; it was their strategy to show presence or power over that region. Totally from a different context, Hohenzollern city palace in Berlin was leveled to the soil just not being able to adjust

with the socialist ideology of so called 'equality' for proletariats rather aristocracy. They decided to establish a built form of a socialist propaganda and after the German reunification; it was again justified according to the democratic political view for its reconstruction where the GDR influence was omitted carefully. From all these exemplifications, the writer wanted to go for an indication: who wins, likely writes the history in own way and such process is indispensable part of our known history. But all the time the strategy was in common, either to humiliate or destroy the evidences as much as they could, so that they may pave a scope to establish the new prevailing one as replacement in the gap of history. The writer thinks, to wipeout the hurdles of the past is nothing but a destruction of heritage as well as identity. Such practice has a deep-rooted impact of colonization around the world. One of the roles of World Heritage Convention was highlighted by author that besides protection of monuments, it also aims to create the future of humanity through a decent outline. This framework could be destructive or constructive; while the key fact is lying on the understanding of 'what to construct'. Such construction could be maintained through cultural identity.

The Assuan Dam project regarding the shifting of Egyptian temples was a milestone and seen as the first endeavor to face conservation challenges in a global perspective. In the decade of 60's, it was regarded as an effort of collective solidarity with all included financial and technical aspects by international community to conserve world heritage. This conveyed us a message to realize the function of identities amongst culture. Previously, culture was only confined either in objectivity or in representations. Now culture is something more comprehensive rather than specific time period, region and materials as the writer believes. Toward a reality, this conception achieved in 80's by Mexico declaration of Cultural policies: creativity and diversity. This implies the idea that culture has no boundary. Again, both tangible and intangible elements of

the culture are complimentary to each other. Here, historic and social value cannot be separated but the original representativeness of any particular culture yet nourishing. The example of Egyptian temple was grasped as awareness through the beginning of new policy according to the writer.

To recapitulate, she named some of UNESCO programs that how intangible culture is getting priority over physical monuments. Culture could be a collective memory through combined intellectual contributions to achieve identity. It is like a 'safeguarding' of identical awareness. The term 'globalization' was evolved, and the range of intangible culture got diversified dimensions. Thus, examples like

Gutenberg Bible, Beethoven's ninth symphony or Murnau's film Metropolis- all are so important for us now. The underneath success of such conception was to build a communication through unified identities especially for the third world which has diversified culture that suffered with colonization.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

No conflict of interest.