

ISSN 2029-2341 / eISSN 2029-2252

2018 Volume 10, Article ID: mla.2018.1064, 1–7

https://doi.org/10.3846/mla.2018.1064

K. Šešelgio skaitymai – 2018 K. Šešelgis' Readings – 2018

# IMPACT OF MEMENTO VALUE ON THE PERCEPTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE: CASE STUDY OF THE MODERN MOVEMENT AND DIALECT OF KAUNAS

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Received 18 February 2018; accepted 10 April 2018

**Abstract.** Memento value in heritage is one of the most essential characteristics facilitating the association between the environment and its users, by connecting structures with space and time, moreover, it helps people to identify their surroundings. However, the emergence of the Modern Movement in the architectural sphere disrupted the reflection of memory and symbols which serve to root the society in its language. Furthermore, it generated an approach that stood against the practice of referring to the past and tradition, which led to the built environment becoming homogeneous and deprived of memento value. This paper focuses on the impact of memento value on the perception and evaluation of cultural heritage. Furthermore, it investigates the notions which are perceived to influence the appraisal of cultural heritage by applying them to the Kaunas dialect of the Modern Movement with an empirical approach.

Keywords: Modern Movement, memento value, cultural memory, Kaunas, cultural heritage, evaluation.

#### Introduction

According to the definition of cultural heritage in *Unesco*'s Draft Medium-Term Plan 1990-1995: The cultural heritage may be defined as the entire corpus of material signs - either artistic or symbolic - handed on by the past to each culture and, therefore, to the whole of humankind. As a constituent part of the affirmation and enrichment of cultural identities, as a legacy belonging to all humankind, the cultural heritage gives each particular place its recognizable features and is the storehouse of human experience. Cultural heritage can be tangible as: buildings, monuments, works of art, landscapes, can be intangible as: folklore of a nation, traditions of a society or a language, furthermore it can be natural. However, the meaning of cultural heritage might be described in different ways by different individuals and by different societies. As Peter Howard states, the simplest definition of heritage is what people have the ambition to preserve for the future, which clearly puts the emphasis on people and on actions taken in the present (Howard, 2010). Furthermore, Brian Graham states that heritage is the selective use of the past for contemporary purposes (Graham, 2005). Consequently, even though most people would consider that heritage just means past and valu-

able things related to the past, it has another significant dimension stated by scholars, which is the impact of it on our present lives. In that regard, cultural heritage plays the role of carrier and passes culture from the past to the future. Furthermore, the sensation it gives to people is mostly related to the moment of perception. As Michael Haldrup points out, heritage has traditionally been bound up with the conservation of an imagined past, hence potentially excluding marginalized experiences and interests from the past it represents (Haldrup & Bærenholdt, 2015). However, this approach raises the question of whether cultural heritage is indeed a substance that people use as symbols, furthermore, whether the concept of heritage is only meaningful as long as people commit a meaning to it. Therefore, evaluating cultural heritage is a problematic proposition.

As Zbigniew Władysław Paszkowski states, values in heritage have a diverse character and the criteria of assessing them are also variable. Especially the rapid change in the natural and cultural environment has an impact on architecture and architectural heritage that affects the functional, spatial and aesthetical needs (Paszkowski, 2011). Therefore, all these changes give rise to the question of

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the value of and how to treat architectural heritage and how to preserve it, furthermore, they establish different approaches and divergent norms for evaluating heritage. Over the centuries, the concept and the treatment of heritage and approaches to conservation of it changed as values changed. As Marilena Vecco states, in the contemporary concept of heritage studies, the monument is no longer considered alone, but also in its context, thus meaning the adoption of an integral approach towards heritage. Parallel to this extension process, the selection criteria for cultural heritage have also changed: while initially the historic and artistic value were the only parameters, other additional ones have now been added (Vecco, 2010). Therefore, even though the historic and the artistic value appear to be sufficient for evaluating cultural heritage in the past, it is possible to state that there are more components for evaluation in contemporary perception. Furthermore, the set of classifications which has been assembled in the contemporary perspective does not have the ingredient of the peoples' perception of the heritage, such as the value of memory, which can be called "Memento Value". Existing approaches and the value which has been attached to cultural heritage are contingent, and they can only be understood by the reflection of them in the societies and the impact of them in their own environment.

As Michel Rautenberg states, cultural heritage can either be heritage by designation, or heritage by appropriation (Rautenberg, 1998). However, in most cases the contribution of the perception of society is omitted. In that regard, the Modern Movement is an intriguing case in the architectural sphere, because while it has been evaluated as cultural heritage by the experts, the perception of non-experts differs. In that regard, examining the Modern Movement can shed light on understanding how people are evaluating cultural heritage.

In order to understand how memento value induces people to qualify artefacts as cultural heritage and to identify the determining components which have an impact on establishing the memento value, and furthermore the perception of society, this paper investigates the notions which are perceived to influence the appraisal of cultural heritage by applying them to the Kaunas dialect of the Modern Movement using an applied empirical approach with open-ended questions with the aim of not affecting participants' perception. It begins by examining the definition of memento value in cultural heritage and its reflection in the Modern Movement. This is followed by the explanation of the language of the Modern Movement and the background instrumental to the formation of the Kaunas dialect. The paper then discusses a survey which has been implemented to a focus group for understanding the indicators which have an impact on the perception of the society. Different indicators were tested in the survey, such as: the impact of ornament, the effect created by patina, the material of the surface and the prior knowledge related with the structure.

# 1. Memento value in cultural heritage and its reflection in the Modern Movement

Buildings, artefacts and environments and the meanings they represent are often integrally tied to the identity and the memories of the society, therefore, while analysing the value of the heritage, it is important not to omit these properties. However, especially when the evaluation of heritage is being attempted, the importance of memento value is often disregarded, while it is significantly crucial especially concerning architectural objects, because it can result in assigning a heritage level to a place which does not specifically implement the other values that a heritage contains. In 2003, Unesco established a new emphasis on heritage by focusing on the process rather than product with the Convention of Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage. In this convention, Unesco defines the term as traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts. However, this definition does not really emphasise or reflect the importance of memory in heritage and the impact of it in society, furthermore, in environment and architecture.

As Kevin Lynch states, "Every citizen has had long associations with some part of his city, and his image is soaked in memories and meanings." (Lynch, 1960). Therefore, people have the need to attach memories and meaning for perceiving the city. This also holds for the perception of cultural heritage, since it is not conceivable to isolate a building from the environment and its surroundings, and furthermore from the image which has been established by the memories of the society. The perception of the image can emerge by various factors which represent the memory on the façades that provide the expression of culture and regional elements in the language that the building uses. Therefore, in valuing architecture and architectural heritage, the notion of an artefact has various evaluative perspectives, and one of the most essential notions is the memento influence in its language.

On the other hand, memento value can also be traced in the language architecture uses in new settlements. The expression of genius loci in architecture implies the reflection of memory and symbols which serves to root the society, therefore, it connects the structures with the space and time. This property of architecture is important for human beings for associating themselves with the place, furthermore, it helps people to feel more comfortable in the environment. As Gary Edson states, history is based on perspectives, however, spatio-temporal continuity is a necessary condition for identity (Edson, 2004). Therefore, the correlation between space and time influences the perception of history for establishing identity, and in that regard, the memento value of the space is not just important for valuing the heritage, but it is also important for the language of forms which attempts to attach roots to the space, so that it can become a meaningful place for the residents. As a result, architecture communicates with memories, but it can also communicate values and a sense of place with the impact of the memories.

However, when the Modern Movement is being analysed, it is possible to assert that the Modern Movement is lacking the memento value in the language it is using. Le Corbusier, who is one of the pioneers of the Modern Movement, states that especially surface in architectural objects gives individuality to the mass (Le Corbusier, 1927). However, when the surfaces of the Modern Movement are scrutinized, the sensation they give is not individuality, but more of an expression of universality. In that regard, it can be asserted that the Modern Movement has achieved the aim it was focusing on, however, it also establishes a feeling in society that the heritage of the Modern Movement does not have the memento value which would help people to connect themselves with the construction. Even though the public spaces and the solutions of the Modern Movement are successful, they do not have the effect of site-specificness or authenticity. Therefore, the Modern Movement generates an architecture which is possible to implant anywhere in the world, which interferes with the perception of beauty, since it is not designed for the society which is experiencing the Modern Movement. As a result, the language Modern Movement uses loses the meaning for people, which could have assisted them in establishing a bonding and place attachment, moreover, the first impression people get from the Modern Movement does not involve the feeling that it is a cultural heritage.

Another problem that occurred in the language of the Modern Movement is again related to its aim of achieving a universal style which can be applied all over the world. When buildings do not incorporate the geographical values of the environment, they lose the characteristics necessary for being functional for the people who are living in that area. However, it is possible to adopt universal values while at the same time using the traditional patterns and materials which accomplish the sensitivity for the users of the region. In that regard, some of the expressions of the Modern Movement established a new language in architecture involving adaptive design methods, and which contains traditional materials and the usage of ornaments.

The city of Kaunas in Lithuania, which was added to UNESCO's Tentative List in 2017, is one of the best examples of establishing its own language by the usage of ornamentation on its surfaces. This characteristic of the dialect of Kaunas makes it exceptional as cultural heritage of the Modern Movement, not only for experts but also for society.

# 2. Language of the Modern Movement and dialect of Kaunas

The city of Kaunas turned into the temporary capital of Lithuania in the interwar period, between 1918 and 1940, due to the capital Vilnius being invaded and occupied several times. As a result, Lithuanian authorities temporarily transferred the government to Kaunas in this period. As

it has been defined in UNESCO's tentative list description, Kaunas had been a modest Imperial Russian garrison town, and it suddenly acquired new importance with its new status as capital. Therefore, this provided an impulse to accelerate its integration into the political, social and cultural context of interwar Europe, through material and non-material forms, such as architecture, diplomacy, culture, and education. As Giedrė Jankevičiūtė states, in this period, civil servants and professionals such as doctors, lawyers, artists and politicians started to reside in the city, which created the need for new headquarters of the institutions and housing for their employees (Jankevičiūtė, 2017). This resulted in construction of all the new government as well as the residential buildings in Kaunas. At the time, the dominant architectural style in the world was the Modern Movement. Therefore, Kaunas used the expression of the Modern Movement; however, it used its own interpretation.

The interpretation of Kaunas differs from the other Modern Movement expressions since most buildings which have been constructed in the world by the influence of the Modern Movement cannot integrate with their environment and the existing cultural elements. However, Kaunas Modernism was integrated rather than contradicting with traditional styles and elements. It adapted to the urban fabric and it did not establish a contrast with the landscape. As a result, it established a different style which is respectful to the environment while keeping the continuity of it. For that matter, it is possible to see the ornaments, which are traces of the cultural memory of the society, in these structures. Moreover, there is the usage of patterns from the vernacular architecture and wood carving impressions made by usage of plaster. Therefore, these components establish a different character and a language in Kaunas's interpretation, and furthermore, Kaunas's interpretation establishes the image which has an impact on its perception by the society.

It can be stated that the expression in Kaunas originates from the fact that a remarkable number of buildings constructed in the interwar period have the impact of individuality and authenticity. When buildings with the expression of Modernism were erected in Berlin, most of them were in the form of social housing. Therefore, the sensitivity of the users was disregarded. As a result, the architectural style which had its emphasis on the users and functionality for the users failed to fulfil the real needs. Furthermore, it established a language which was an average interpretation that can accommodate various people. This was one of the essentialities at the time, related to the need for an immense number of dwellings because of the World War, and furthermore, to the problems caused by the extensive immigration to the city from the countryside. As a result, the architecture was economically feasible, however, it did not pay attention to the peculiarities of the location.

Kaunas also experienced the impact of the war and the building boost related to turning the small town into a capital. However, architects still succeeded to design in a way which managed to be site-specific. Moreover, the buildings which were constructed at the time were predominantly small-scale constructions rather than massive complexes, which could have provided the advantage of working directly with the architects. As Paulius Laurinaitis states, local architects that were returning home after their studies in Western European universities brought back the new architectural ideas and transformed them into distinctive local form, that was later named Kaunas School of Architecture (Laurinaitis, 2017). Therefore, even though most architects who produced artefacts in this period studied abroad, they did have local roots, which established their knowledge about and their sensitivity towards the cultural memory of the society in their designs. As a result, it is easy to trace the impact of memory on the surfaces of Kaunas; furthermore, the buildings that were constructed reflect identity without rupturing the past, which is affecting the perception of the society in the contemporary perspective as well.

For understanding the impact of cultural memory on the perception of the society in Lithuania, and furthermore the impact of it on a larger group including participants from other countries, a survey has been performed.

## 3. Survey design

The aim of this survey is analysing the indicators of the perception and attitudes of people towards cultural heritage of the Modern Movement and the impact of memento value. The focus is to find out the relationship between the façade elements and the impression, and furthermore, how it is affecting the perception of cultural heritage. The survey was designed to be implemented by interviews and a questionnaire to test participants' awareness of their surroundings, furthermore to investigate the determining components which have an impact on their discernment.

The survey follows the methodology of Galindo and Rodriguez on environmental aesthetics and psychological well-

being, where they implemented extensive use of photographs to test respondents' awareness of their environment and the main affective responses that established their judgement (Galindo & Rodriguez, 2000). However, in this research, the awareness of heritage and the perceived notions which assess the judgment on heritage have been investigated by demonstrating pictorial material and asking open-ended questions. The reason for asking a rather open-ended type of question is based on the research methodology of Hugh Coolican, which suggests that any predetermined options or suggestions might have an influence on the subjects' imagination and perception, therefore, the results of the experiment might be distorted (Coolican, 1994). There are two main questions that have been posed to the participants. The first question posed was, "in your perception, which one(s) of the pair is cultural heritage?". The second question was (after the participants decided their selection) "why did you choose that(/ those) building(s) as cultural heritage?". The pictorial material was selected from a collection of photographs which were taken by the author or from online resources. An example from the comparison sheet is in Figure 1.

The survey is a questionnaire prepared by using photographs of 15 pairs of merged images, in which each pair aims to examine the perception of people about cultural heritage and the specific indicators and components they contemplate in their decision. The indicators which were tested in the survey were: ornament, material, patina and the prior knowledge about buildings in the specific region. In 8 of the pairs, Modern Movement structures were compared to other structures with varying architectural styles. In the other 7 pairs, Modern Movement structures were collated, and the pairs contained different dialects, except for one of the pairs. Different façade materials were chosen across the set of pairs, such as wood, stone and plaster. Furthermore, buildings with patina and buildings with ornaments were used in the comparisons (Table 1).



Figure 1. Example of the comparison sheet in the questionnaire which has been used for the analysis. 1) Turkey 2) Germany

	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13		14		15	
	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В	A	В
LOCATION	DE	LT	TR	DE	TR	LT	TR	TR	TR	LT	DE	LT	LT	TR	LT	TR	OTH	ОТН	LT	ОТН	TR	LT	TR	LT	TR	LT	LT	LT	TR	LT
SURFACE MATERIAL	ST	PL	PL	PL	ST	PL	ST	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	ST	PL	PL	PL	PL	PL	WD	PL	WD	PL
ORNAMENT/	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
PATINA	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MODERN MOVEMENT	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
CULTURAL HERITAGE	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
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Table 1. Table of the indicators and information about the comparison pairs

# 3.1. Participation & procedures

A total of 70 participants took part in the survey through one to one interviews either by interactive online communication tools or face to face. Participants were heterogeneous regarding age, which ranged in between 20-60, and heterogeneous regarding where they are from. Thirty participants out of the total 70 were selected from people who are living in Lithuania, and familiar with the Modern Movement heritage of Kaunas. Another 30 participants were selected from Turkey, who are acquainted with the Republican period dialect of the Modern Movement, and with Ottoman Architecture. The final 10 participants out of 70 were selected as a test group from different countries. Participants in the survey were selected from different education levels, furthermore, only 10 of the participants were chosen from the field of architecture or fields related to cultural heritage, since the main aim of the survey is to test the perception of non-experts. The questionnaire includes a set of 30 colour photographs of Modern Movement buildings and buildings of various other architectural styles, in fifteen pairs. All pairs of photographs have been demonstrated to the participants one by one, and the participants have been asked to choose the ones which they would identify as cultural heritage in their own perception. The options of choosing a, b, both a and b, and neither, have been given to them.

## 3.2. Analysis

With the aim of achieving the research objectives of this study, three types of analysis were carried out: (1) first, an analysis of the perception of cultural heritage and what is affecting the perception of people; (2) subsequently, an analysis for observing the impact of prior knowledge and information on judgement; (3) an analysis for observing the difference between experts' and non-experts' opinions.

1) Figure 2, presented below, shows the results obtained by analyzing the percentages of a, b, ab, and n for each pair of photographs which has been demonstrated for evaluating the perception of cultural heritage.

According to the chart, as it can be examined for pairs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9, people chose a, and in pair 7, people chose b, which were demonstrating the building that contains ornament on its façade, rather than the building with a Modern Movement expression. Furthermore, in pairs 6 and 10, people made their preferences towards the buildings which have the layer of patina. In pairs 12 and 13, the selection of the people varies depending on their cultural background and the architectural language they are familiar with, where the Turkish participants were more likely to label the Turkish building as cultural heritage, and the Lithuanian participants were more likely to label the Lithuanian building as cultural heritage, even though all buildings in these pairs are considered to be cultural heritage. Moreover, in pairs 14 and 15, people are more likely to perceive traditional materials such as wood as cultural heritage rather than buildings which are built with more modern techniques.

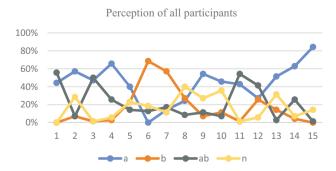


Figure 2. Perception of cultural heritage according to the answers of the participants

2) Figure 3 shows the main results produced by the subset of participants who are from Lithuania. It is based on the analysis of the percentages of a, b, ab, and n for each pair of photographs which has been demonstrated for evaluating the perception of cultural heritage like in Figure 2, however, in this chart the participants are all from Lithuania.

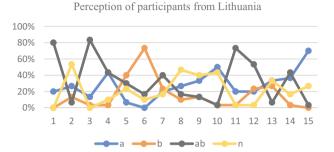


Figure 3. Perception of people from Lithuania on evaluating cultural heritage

According to the analysis, participants from Lithuania are more aware of the Modern Movement heritage in their environment by the impact of the memento value which helps them to connect with the structures, and furthermore, by the education and the information given to them. In pairs 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11, they have succeeded to identify the Modern Movement buildings in Kaunas and they have evaluated them as cultural heritage. In pairs 8 and 13, the demonstrated buildings were lesser-known buildings of the Modern Movement in Kaunas, and therefore, the scores on these buildings to be chosen as cultural heritage were lower than the buildings the participants were informed about. Furthermore, in pair 10, the participants' decision was related with the knowledge and the impact of the patina, and the participants could not easily identify the other building in the pair even though it had the same architectural approach. In pairs 14 and 15, participants decisions were affected by the usage of wood as the surface material.

3) Figure 4 below shows the main results obtained by the subset of participants who are experts.

According to the analysis, participants who have expertise in architecture or cultural heritage identified the Modern Movement artefacts of Kaunas, and furthermore the Modern Movement artefacts from other regions, more accurately than the non-experts. However, when Bauhaus influenced cultural heritage of the Modern Movement was demonstrated next to a building which contains ornament on its façade, in pair 2, even though 40% of the participants correctly chose the Bauhaus influenced building, there were still 40% of participants who incorrectly appraised both as cultural heritage.

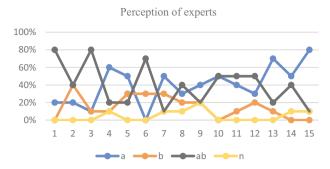


Figure 4. Perception of experts on evaluating cultural heritage

#### **Conclusions**

As the literature review of this paper suggests, there are various criteria for evaluating cultural heritage, and furthermore, the criteria may differ from people to people. However, while evaluating cultural heritage, it is essential to consider the correlation of it with the environment and society, moreover, memento influence of it for the environment and the image it establishes. People tend to feel a familiarity towards places and buildings which carry symbols related to their own cultures or their environment, which help them to associate the place with their memories. Therefore, this characteristic of the environment can be achieved by the usage of pattern language in architecture.

One of the ways to use patterns and pattern language in architecture for the expression of identity is by the usage of ornaments and traditional materials. Traditional materials and building techniques can help people to associate themselves with the environment, and moreover, ornaments on the façade have the same impact. Even though it might seem as if ornaments are only for decoration and for beautifying façades, they have other properties that they add to buildings, such as: identifying, locating, attention guiding, establishing the proportion and organising. Although ornament has all these different properties that it adds to architecture, there was a decrease in the usage of ornament and of traditional materials in the Modern Movement by the main discourse of the style. Furthermore, the intention of establishing a universal character led to the outcome of there being a paucity of memento value in the Modern Movement's expression.

Memento value in architecture is essential and it is a necessity for people to establish the time and space correlation. Moreover, the correlation between the space and time establishes a temporal continuity for human beings, which results in stabilizing their sense of identity and sense of life. In that regard, this characteristic of the Modern Movement developed an attitude in society which emanates the perception of the Modern Movement not being regarded as cultural heritage.

According to the survey results, people responded to various indicators while evaluating cultural heritage. One of the main indicators is ornament. On 8 of the pairs, ornament was used to test the reaction of people, however, on 4 of the pairs, the ornamented buildings did not have any architectural value. Nevertheless, 97% of the participants considered ornamented buildings as cultural heritage. Furthermore, the patina also has an impact on the perception. On pair 10, even though the compared buildings have the same proportions and approaches of the Modern Movement, 36% of participants determined both as not being cultural heritage, and 46% of participants selected the building as cultural heritage which has the patina on the surface. Moreover, when the results are being analysed related with the use of traditional materials on the façade, such as wood, people had the tendency to choose wooden façades rather than plastered ones.

However, when the results produced by the people from Lithuania are considered, it can be stated that they are more likely to identify the Modern Movement buildings from Kaunas on the pairs as cultural heritage compared to the participants from other countries. Lithuanians evaluate the buildings they see in their surroundings as cultural heritage based on their prior knowledge, and furthermore by the impact of the associations they can establish towards the buildings. However, when Modern Movement buildings that they do not have prior information about appear in the comparison, they do not identify those buildings as cultural heritage.

On the other hand, when the comparison pairs are shown to the experts, the indicators which influence nonexperts' perception do not have a significant impact.

In conclusion, the findings of the study suggest that the usage of ornament and other elements which reflect culture have an impact on the perception of people when they are evaluating cultural heritage. Therefore, the Kaunas dialect of the Modern Movement is more likely to be evaluated as cultural heritage by society, which is related with its ornament and traditional material usage which establishes the image that reflects the memento value. However, the paucity of memento value and the lack of indicators related with memory in the Modern Movement still has an influence on a broader scale and in the perception of people, which makes it hard for people to evaluate the structures of the Modern Movement as cultural heritage.

Finally, it must be noted that the present research is part of a larger research effort which is currently in progress, which includes the goal of improving the accuracy of the findings and the influence of the other possible indicators through increasing the number of participants.

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# ATMINTIES VERTĖ SUVOKIANT KULTŪROS PAVELDĄ: MODERNIZMO JUDĖJIMO IR JO KAUNIETIŠKOJO DIALEKTO ATVEJO TYRIMAS

#### H. A. Dogan

### Santrauka

Viena svarbiausių paveldo charakteristikų yra atminties vertė, užtikrinanti aplinkos ir jos vartotojų sąsajas, įtvirtinanti objektus erdvėje ir laike, dar daugiau – padedanti identifikuoti žmonėms juos supančią aplinką. Tačiau išsivystęs modernizmo judėjimas architektūroje nutraukė atminties ir simbolikos naudojimą architektūrinėje kalboje. Išsivystė priešiškumas praeities ir tradicijos tęstinumui praktikoje, dėl to aplinka tapo homogeniška ir netekusi atminties vertės. Straipsnyje tiriama atminties vertė suvokiant ir vertinant kultūros paveldą. Taip pat nagrinėjami aspektai, taikyti modernizmo judėjimo kaunietiškajame dialekte ir darę įtaką šio kultūros paveldo reikšmei.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** modernizmo judėjimas, atminties vertė, kultūrinė atmintis, Kaunas, kultūros paveldas, vertinimas.