

Relics and Us

An adjourned catalog of the
relic in today's society

Extended Essay
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Abstract

I wander for the halls of a museum,

Reflected in a thousand fragments

Behind 5 mm thick glass boards,

Empty onomatopoeia of deafening shots from the phones of herds
of crazy tourists.

A haiku on a sunny day spent looking inside.

Relic or surviving memorial of something past, as shown in the definition read on the Collins English dictionary; But what does that mean? What are the Common features that serve to identify what is a relic today? What about our relationship with the chosen objects, what exactly are they? I tried to answer these questions through an investigation that takes its steps from a field experience analysis (see appendix) to studies and delirium came out from too many, really too many, researches. Products of the belief and projections of us, the relics accompany our terrestrial journey, evolving with us and reaching, today, the Perks of the Dematerialization (photographs on PC and social network). The indexicality of what the relic is, our relationship with the object, material or not as it is, with the influence of that object on our life, how it is sometimes imposed and how often the emotional value is transformed into something marketable (advertisement). The concept of the Punctum sought in what is shown to us is the concept of “to show” and “to be”; These are just some of the topics I’ll discuss later.

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Introduction

I am an hoarders, I admit, guilty! I feel extreme pain in separating myself from what is minimally traceable to elements of my past, clearly this feature is senseless and an impediment to the normal succession of my days (see my Garage!). It is supposed, given my non-pharaonic origin, that, dying, my goods will not accompany me in the otherworldly journey that I prepare to face.

Digression is a strategy to postpone the conclusion, a multiplication of time within the work, a perpetual escape; Escape from what? From death, certainly, it is said in an introduction to Trimstam Shandy by an Italian writer, Carlo Levi.¹

The phrase, definitely a catch phrase, is not random though. I believe that the reason for my disorder, I dare say, obsessive compulsive, is precisely to be sought in my will not to die, not to let my environment (the existing context around my person) perish.

The object itself is a digression, every decorum and tinsel not of first necessity (which can be just a chipped stone to make an arrowhead) is as if it were a macro parenthesis in a mathematical expression. Who knows, focused as we are in the resolution of microadditions, we could forget to solve the problem as a whole, and we could forget about death and she could forget about us.

Materiality is an illusion. Banally, plastic, from its practically infinite existence, gives evidence and suggests how its usefulness will never be vain and as we as well, in 150 years’ time, will happily lie down not lifting a finger sunbathing on Ikea’s garden chairs.

¹Calivino I. Lezioni americane

A digression and transgression that I prepare to perpetuate through the Extended Essay just begun, is the Search itself. What's the point of struggling on a subject that ultimately is doomed to death (as writing an Extend Essey on the 2017 just ended).

A relic is a chosen object, in the wasteland of objects and memories that loom over our heads from birth to today. It will have certainly happened to you, my reader, visiting an art gallery (or a clothing store or, in fact, any other place) to be inexplicably attracted by a work, to have chosen it with a *glance*.

The unknown and involuntary elements that have forced you are the Punctum, theorized by Roland Barthes in his "light room", are some sort of nostalgic references present in all things, affecting our memories and consciences without the need to be forcibly identified. Like the Punctum, which are the very same relics, they affect our lives as well as we influence theirs, as it will be more specifically addressed in the second chapter.

The museum example, that has been specifically chosen as it is very dear to me, can help in understanding a further point, the museum and the exhibition space as a meeting place between the user and the object, which is found in bystander objects through the Punctum (precisely burning and biting).

The place par excellence where a fan of relics can seek and regain his faith.

To help me in my research I thought it would be interesting to refer to real stories, so I decided to prepare a questionnaire on the topic: "Meetings". They are stories of meetings between objects and people

¹The cathedrals are like an incredible neon sign on which is written BELIEVE IN GOD. So , on museums as the GUGGENHEIM is written : BELIEVE IN ART

Para los humanos, contemplan obras tan colosales indifereente a lo solo natural de una manera inconsciente. Es el sentimiento místico que todos tenemos, incluso sin saberlo, para mí es lo que dio origen a las religiones, las catedrales son un increíble anuncio de NEÓN en el que se lee - 'CREER EN DIOS' -

Ahora con la construcción de museos como el GUGGENHEIM se busca lo mismo, la única diferencia es que en el móm del GUGGENHEIM se lee:

CREER EN EL ARTE



told by the direct interested, a meeting between us and the relics of others, the stories themselves, published on the website dedicated to my research (<https://ericamanna.wixsite.com/ilmiosito>) and found In its entirety in the appendix.

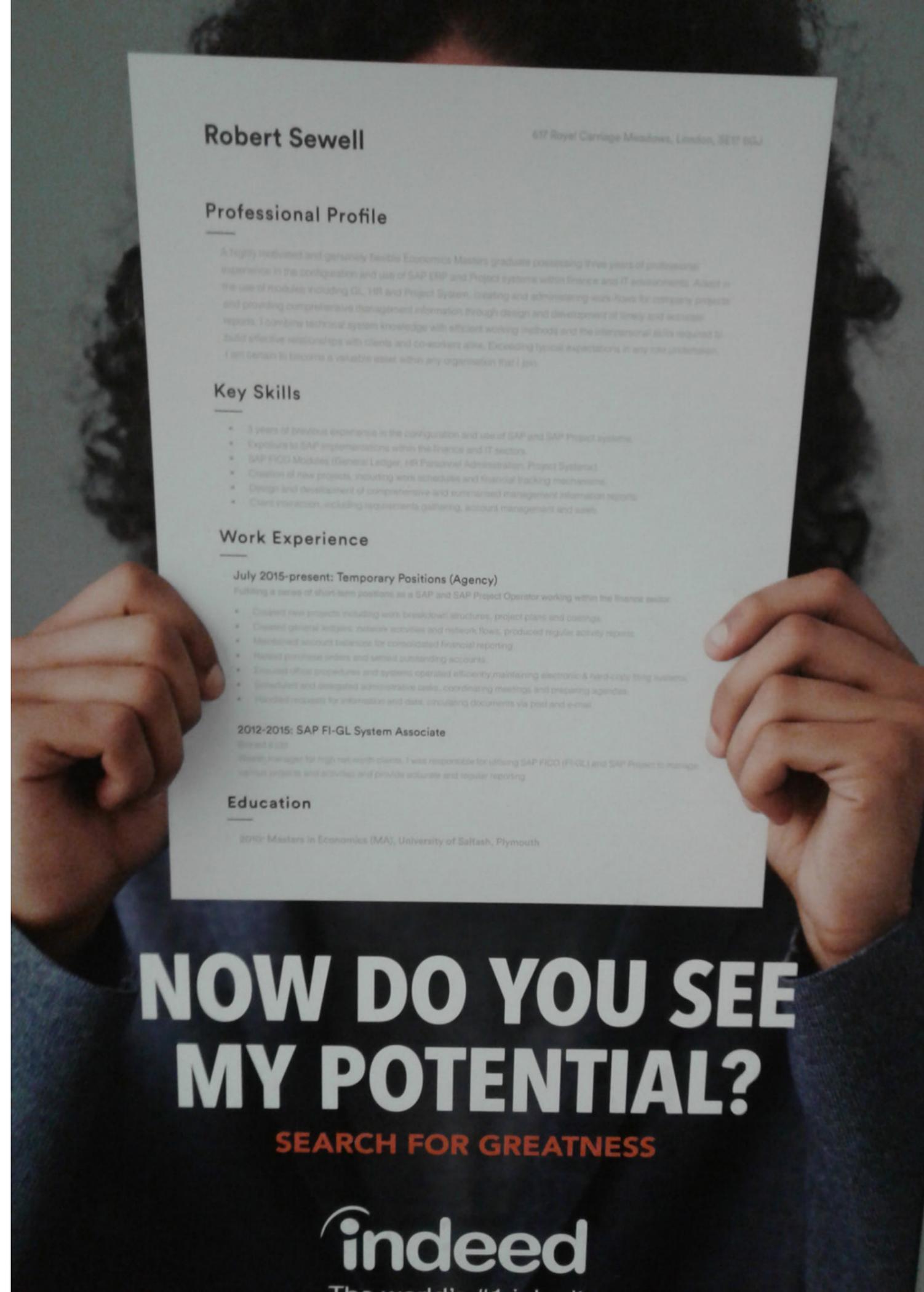
The creation of the site has been a further important step in my work, in fact it is possible to see in the third chapter how the concept of dematerialization has been particularly important in the present way of perceiving relics in our society.

“Secondly, technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself. Above all, it enables the original to meet the beholder halfway, be it in the form of a photograph or a phonograph record. The cathedral leaves its locale to be received in the studio of a lover of art; the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room.” Walter Benjamin writes in his “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

Sharing is democracy, information must be shared and democratic but if not accompanied by critical thought it can lead to a passive assumption by the public, which is gifted with a product specially prepared for them: the Exploitation of the feelings invested, in our specific case, on the relics.

The personality becomes quantifiable in terms of money (take as an example the curriculum). The difference between showing, owning and being is tapering off in a society based on consumerism. In a context like this, finally, where are the so romantic and insignificant elements, such as the relics? What are the common elements to identify what a relic is to date? I will be trying to answer, between research and various surveys in the next pages.

Thank you for the time you have dedicated to me



Chapter One: The indexical truth

I began this research guided by the reading of few lines typed up, a quotation by Umberto Eco veiled of that sort of superiority of which, we miscreants, we feel invested. *“It isn’t the relic that makes the faith, but is the faith, that makes the relic”*.

It would sound like a further confirmation to our beliefs; Except that the phrase was reported by the author, as pronounced by the Librarian Monk’s lips living in a monastery placed on the tops of Mount Athos, a devout man down to the obstinacy, so described by Eco.

And here it all takes on a new meaning, what is a relic to this day? If the definition of the term (see abstract) brings us back to the fragment’s concept, it is legitimate to ask: fragment of what? You don’t want ,seriously, to tell me that it’s possible that a lock of hair of Our Lady has been preserved from time and wear inside the small oval reliquary housed in the rich reliquary of the Cathedral of St. Nicholas in Palmi in Italy, and even if it were, how to justify the mystical ability of the aforementioned hair to heal the bystanders in its presence?

A lie fragment.

The list goes on from the secular world to the religious one: legendary is Elvis Presley’s Pink Cadillac kept in Tennessee and equally legendary is the presence of St John the Baptist’s 12 year old skull in a German Cathedral in the 12th century. Both are lies, impossible as the existence of an infant skull when the saint was an adult. The Mephis Cadillac, in fact, is just one of the many existing copies, after all the singer used to change it every six months and, after all, if the

relic does not affirm its own value in oneness, what does it do?

The comparison is also possible, in a small way, through memories modified by time and disease. Does this make them less valid? Are the emotions contained within them considered less meaningful? In layman’s terms how to measure the value of a relic?

The historical value of a relic is inherent in its own definition, a fragment of something of the past, it is but it has also been. Preciousness and rarity: both explained in ways aimed by the following quote by Berger: *“The bogus religiosity which now surrounds original works of art, and which is ultimately dependent upon their market value, has become the substitute for what paintings lost when the camera made them reproducible. Its function is nostalgic. It is the final empty claim for the continuing values of an oligarchic, undemocratic culture. If the image is no longer unique and exclusive, the art object, the thing, must be made mysteriously so.”*



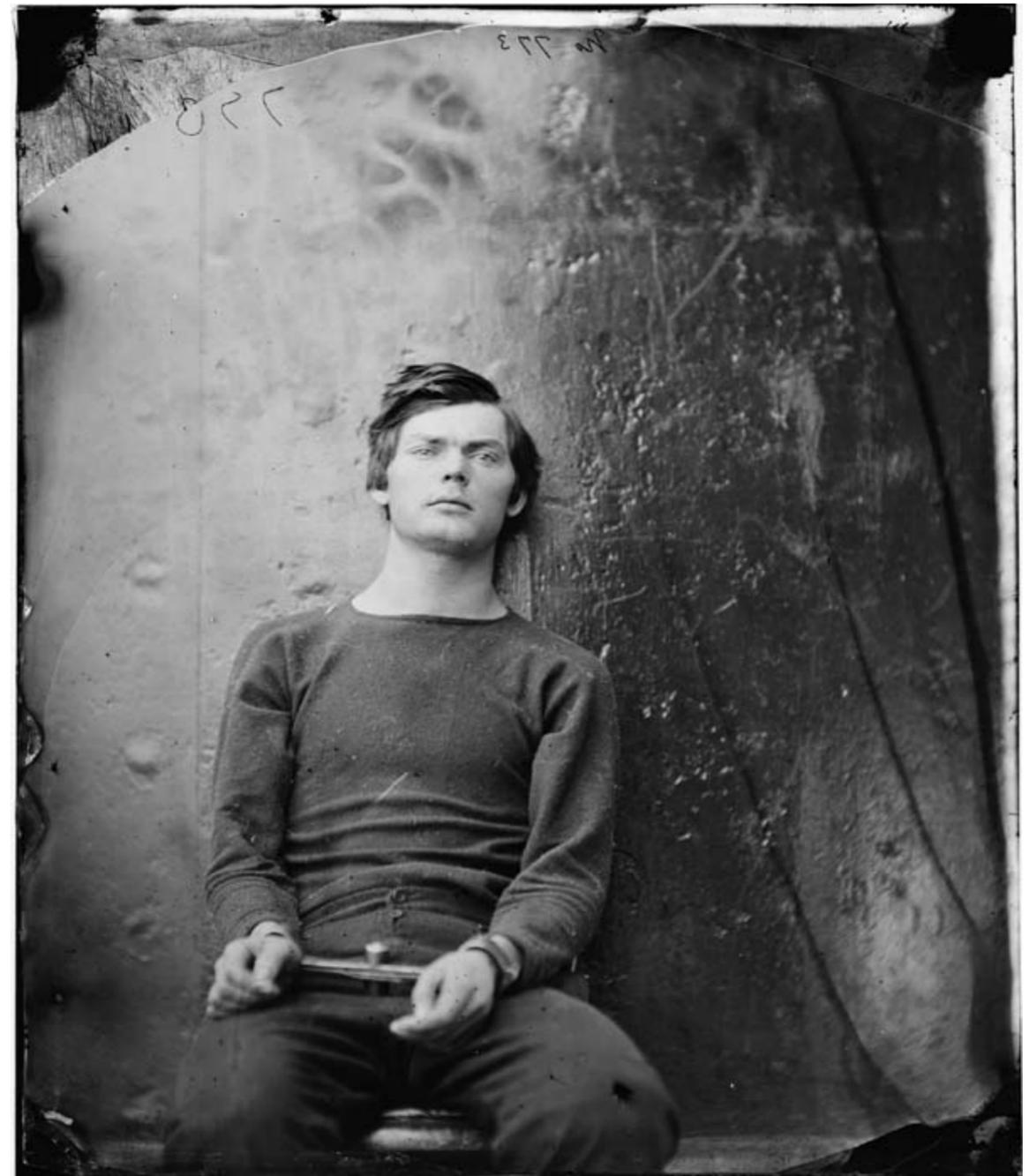
Finally the essence, the ultimate “meaning”, the romantic component of the object. I’ll follow in the in-depth explanation of the value in the following chapters, but at the moment it is sufficient to say that the value of a relic is inexorably “relative” and indexical.

Earlier It has been made reference to the concept of Unicum linked to the advent of photography. In fact, the latter, seems to have messed up a lot of things. In this regard it is interesting to observe how in the answers given by the users surveyed in the questionnaire (see appendix), photographs constitute a relic common to many.

The exposure imprinted by the light on the photographic slab makes it possible to create a perfect copy of what is beyond the objective. The objective is what is defined as Kinoglaz, it is neutral. An eye without any pretence towards the image. An exact replica.

The only drawback is represented in the Human Act related to photographing. It is the photographer who performs the fateful *click*, and it is through his experience with the scene that we enjoy the image. The scenes in fact, are always composed, almost never represent the truth. Through specific angles it is possible, for example, to obtain prospective effects aimed at suggesting a certain emotion (an unprotected or helpless subject is exalted by a shot from above). From here you can reach up to invasive interventions (photomontages).

This is the great limitation of photography, being a propaganda medium, the photo is incontrovertibly linked to my vision, I photograph, I have chosen. As much as the viewer knows, reality has existed only in the instant of the shot, not one more and not one less. This is what makes the pictures of old portrait so deeply pungent, those eyes laid who knows where, continue to stare from the afterlife of a situation already happened. Photographs create an alternative reality, they exist parallel to our Life, so as relics.



The scene is dead, it will never come back to its accuracy. The relic is the perfect tangible consideration of this process, it belongs to the past and to death, it is through it that we have the unmistakable proof of this past existence.

It is then that immortality is finally reached, it is a sort of magical process, the enjoyed fragment becomes collective memory (the

moment in which the relics and the spectator confront each other, they “look into each other’s Eyes”) to transform itself into personal memory at the very instant when it’s remembered.

My memory will be related to my experience and characterize my future through its implications on my way of conceiving the world. In layman’s terms what we see and enters our experience, the relics, have an effective influence. Relics can, therefore, heal the illness.

“We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves” scrive John Berger nel suo *“Ways of seeing.”*

Each relic is in itself an object (material or immaterial). It has been previously said how objects create a sort of “parallel reality”. Each of these, in fact, has in itself a series of semantic meanings extraneous to “our” meaning (what we as owners project on them).

The relic is a symbol, of ourselves and simultaneously of what it properly is, and it is what McLuhan defines as cold media. Contrary to hot media, cold ones require the participation of the user.

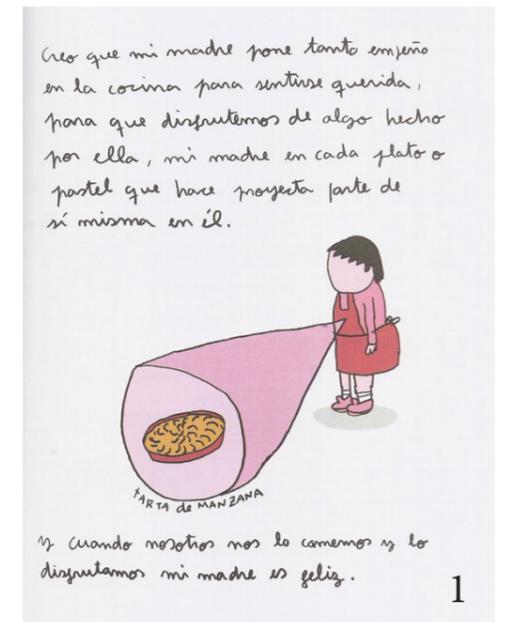
The object is there and it is nothing more than itself, a fragment of the past that exists and has existed, that’s all. That meaning, what makes it “important” and worthy of not being forgotten or thrown away in a brutal great cleanliness of the attic, we have added it through our beliefs.

A fragment of indexical truth.

Chapter Two: Relics and us

I would like to introduce this chapter through a work from the production of a famous Italian Caravaggesque painter, rare case in itself, given that at the time women were not admitted to painting schools and that in 1616, Artemisia Gentileschi, this was her name, was in absolute the first. The choice of the iconographic subject of the “Judith that beheads Holofernes” well stood for the needs of the papacy (often representing the Commission itself and anyway having a great influence on it) that claimed in Judith a symbol of the church decapitating the Devil (Holofernes) but also has a second reading key.

In fact there is another biblical narrative on which the painter’s choice could fall: that of Salome. Judith and Salome are alike, both maidens get the decapitation of a man through their seductive abilities. The choice to represent Judith was dictated by the will to represent the one who is the power herself, she does not ask, but decides.



¹My mother project a part of herself in every dish or cake that she prepares. When we eat them and we like them, she’s happy.



Salomè is succubus of Herod's power, that somehow decides to indulge her. Judith, in contrast, is an independent and strong heroine. The choice was certainly dictated by the painter's experience and her character (emerging in the many letters exchanged with the patrons), which seems to have also been self-depicted here and in the majority of her works. Agostino Tassi, the young painter's perspective teacher, according to the trial's proceedings, raped her. The biographical story is therefore inextricably linked to the artistic activity of the woman, but it is not consumed in it alone.

The whole work of Artemisia has undergone a feminist polarization "*Artemisia Gentileschi was the great painter of the war between the sexes,*" says Germaine Greer, a leading figure in the feminist movement. A rather reductive assertion as the painter's talented career can certainly not be limited to an ideological message. The artistic profile of the woman is often forgotten, in favor of her sensationalist biographical story, in fact the socially accepted production, like Artemisia's one, had always been limited to those works that embraced the concept of a

strong and independent woman.

The influence however exists and is due to the fact that the works themselves are children of the time and the personal experiences that have formed and led the artist in his/her production. In terms of my topic it is possible to say that the relationship between relics and us is equal, we have a reciprocal influence on each other.

In the first chapter it has been dealt with how the relics constitute part of "our" truth. Relics are, in fact, projections of ourselves (our past, what we love and we want to tell about ourselves) on the material world. Art, in this sense, constitutes a direct product, as we ourselves are the creators of our relics.

Joseph Cornell became famous especially for his "dream Machines", in which references to our speech are manifold, as these boxes, were filled with relics gathered from the artist: a cropped image of a bird's lithograph, Precious gems, shells, some ribbon's filament and mirrors. The compositional order desired by the artist within his "devices" was almost always thematic (a box told about celestial phenomena, another about classicity).

The mirror was an important element as it was possible to revise fragments of oneself inside the boxes and literally overlap and approach the elements contained therein. As suggested by Kenneth Goldsmith, they were extremely primitive social Network interfaces. They called the viewer's attention by inserting it into the narrative (in the subject of the box) in progress as Facebook does, presenting and resending to ourselves our face, continually, from one discussion to another on our bulletin boards. A face, by the way, that is very pleasant, after all, we chose that image. It was Berger who wrote that advertising creates a sort of overlap between the viewer and the person improved by the product purchased (an identical process that takes place while watching/looking at ourselves in the windows).

An exclusion from controlled happiness that allows a confrontation and through which envy is conveyed (it is interesting to note in this regard, and we will do it more specifically in the third chapter, as all existing social networks have a grid format that allows, in fact, a comparison between the images and to get a contextual idea at a glance).

Cornell, basically, was an accumulator too “*and his thing about Utopia Parkway was a department of which he was the administrator, the manager and the staff*” (wrote once one of his guests). We can all understand him, today we are curators and archivists of our online profiles and our personal files, our dematerialized relics. The appropriation according to Walter Benjamin also happens through the collecting: the children paint, trace, cut, seize and appoint to become the rightful owners of the world around them. The topic will be soon deepened and expanded in chapter three.

I will dwell on in the explanation of the now famous (within my research at least) “value for meaning”. I do it through another artist, an artistic current, in truth Arte Povera has at its base the concept of the greater importance of the essence and the meaning of the object rather than its visual form, of its poverty in fact, since, among other things, in this specific case, that is the relics, we talk about simple objects.

It is useful, at this point, to speak more specifically of the Punctum: as mentioned in the introduction the word is Latin and means puncture, hole or small cut. Used by Barthes to identify what a photograph stings, attracts, strikes and injures, it is a characteristic linked to the object itself, disconnected from its history or function. It is probably a particular of, again, indexical importance; insignificant in the eyes of others.



This is the link that I would like to identify in my work with what each of us reveals as our “own” relic. An example: in Eugenio Montale’s “Little Testament” he claims the importance of the insignificant. He sets up a composition on the blackest catastrophe and on the thought of the single man, who, futile as he is, has the only function to clamor for his own human nature. An act of faith in what more than everything else is doomed to perish (thought and human feeling, with man himself) and in the moral values invested in the most tenuous “tracks” (*mother-of-pearl snail-track, or ground glass powder/ Keep its face-powder in your compact*). Objects without any value embellished by the humanistic Inprint left on them (see Chapter 3).

*“The depth must be hidden. where? At the surface”*¹

Within the narrative there is a type of plot tested and made tangible in the 3 phases of “The Hero’s Journey” (in turn further subdivided), theorized by Vogler. Each story, according to the American screenwriter, has therefore some elements universally traceable in a hero’s journey (also found in stories usually told at bars). They are twelve stages on the frame of which there are in fact the many possible variations that almost all modern stories use.

Within the hero’s journey there is the “Meeting with the Mentor”. What the hero needs to get on the road: advice, direction, a “magic” tool to take (a weapon, but also knowledge, or self-confidence, training). The relic, for its part, preserves for itself the disturbing characteristic of being an object of great power, magical objects that push to the narrative turn of our own history. Every object, material or not, is in this sense a magical object.

In the tale by Kafka “Der Kübelreiter” (The bucket Rider), the protagonist flies at the turn of the empty bucket brought to stockpile coal in 1917 winter of War of, time in which the lack of coal represented a big problem. To testify this the prayers made by the character to

the charcoal and his wife, who, annoyed, drives him away with a rag almost as if it were a fly.

Another emblematic story: Charlemagne fell in love with a woman, once dead, his love for her did not change, so much so that the Archbishop suspicious of an evil spell examined the lifeless body finding there a ring put under her tongue. When the ring was moved the king changed the object of his attention and poured his love on its new owner, then he, annoyed, finally threw the ring in the lake. It was like that Charlemagne never again moved away from the shores of Constance Lake.

Relics are always a mirror of our necessities (the coal pail in a moment of lean). Their help and impediment in the unfolding of our stories constitute only the guiding thread through which the events are recalled. Another writer (Primo Levi) reminds us through his account of the experience in Auschwitz of how “*It happens easily, to those who have lost everything, to lose themselves.*”

This is what happens when relics fail to perform their first function, the psychological cancellation (and, well, in the specific case, also physical) lived by him and his companions of suffering, remembering the concentration camp. There are many references to contemporaneity, one among all, the path of annulment in reaction to the current consumeristic society, lived by Michael Landy over the three years spent cataloguing and destroying all his possessions.

The object’s consequences on the course of history are visible also through the placebo effect I mentioned in the first chapter, for example, in the field of religiosity, as the beneficial effects of the repeated rhythm of prayers on our body, as in Buddhist Mantras. The ritual cannibalism with the transmission of the virtues from the dead person to the living one, constitutes another of the many possibilities reached by the relics. Ottavio Tondi, the protagonist of “Panorama”

by T.Pincio, strongly fights in the defense of his idea according to which is right that relatives and friends of the deceased wreak havoc, like true cannibals, feeding of intimacy of the dead (his things, what he cared for). As he says at the end of the day “*this is what remains of us, the bustle of others.*”

The relic is also symbolic, not only because it refers to a dense network of its own semantic connections (eg: mirror is equal to beauty, vanity, etc.) but also because it is about something (eg: a photograph of the 1906 earthquake with subsequent fire in San Francisco) without allowing direct experimentation (in our example burning and suffocating by smoke) of the experience. We observe the event from a safe and prudent perspective, sometimes even admiring the quality of the lights and shadows obtained by the photographer.

The symbol of what the relic is, represents a condensation of what haiku (Japanese poems generally composed of 17 syllables arranged in three groups,) are, having as objective the reenactment of an emotion through a series of images that we could define as surrealist. They are to be considered real relics, symbols of moods and perfect examples of what it is meant as relic as a summary of itself.



Chapter Three: I own, therefore I am

It has been discussed in the previous chapter of the relic as our own projection on the tangible world, in fact the current society is undergoing a certain polarization towards the world of digital. In this context it is therefore possible to talk about projection on the intangible, a further dematerialization within the world of objects, which then tend to fragmentation in pixels, tracing and binary code. Let's think about our passwords, or security questions: They are some sort of self-portraits (for example, your dog's name close to your father's date of birth), nourishing our most personal data, our relics and our preferences.

This particular point opens the way to endless reflections on the world of marketing in the digital age. The “likes” that I put, the sites that I visit, create an ecosystem of products and suggestions devised on me, I am the center. The benchmark of marketing to date is the *self* (even the store in its physical terms is transformed and becomes a laptop lit in your own bedroom).

There are many advantages that can be drawn from this situation, as well as the disadvantages: an economy can not be tailored on minorities, it would not get the desired profit (only a small craftsman could in fact). The tendency has emerged to try to homologate in a “*type*” that corresponds to all and none at the same time (an example is the horoscope always so adapt and interpretable). The idea is to provide “prepackaged” products suitable to the requirements of the “*type*”.

Pinterest and Instagram are image storage sites where users



unwittingly work for the companies themselves. The whole database of images of the two sites grows through the human work of those who post, share and add “Hashtags”, so the company profits grow equally. The content of the photographs posted on social networks does not appear to be of any real importance to the aforementioned. For us that specific photo represents a family memory, a relic to say it in the terms of my research. For companies, instead, it isn’t like this: every image is interchangeable with another, the important thing is that you go on posting. The difficulty with which we get ourselves free by unsubscribing from a Twitter account is revealing: Are you sure? Laura will miss you! Another appeal to romance.

Relics in a copy and paste society are thus turning into something easily quantifiable in money. It is not a novelty in truth, what happens today with the curriculum and advertising happened in the past with what I have here called value for preciousness (see Chapter 1). To go back to one of the examples used in the second chapter, in a letter addressed to Cosmo II, Artemisia Gentileschi, promises to finish before her departure from Florence a painting particularly expensive for the high amount of blue he had requested. The gold of the sacred Byzantine icons or the blue, when this became the most expensive colour on the market, were not used accidentally for the representation of the divine (by extension also of the sky).

They testify the client’s closeness to the object of his prayers for, if it can be said like that, nobility of mind. In the collections of medieval patrons or renaissance collectors there was not a great distinction between curious, beautiful or relic object and the embellishment of the reliquaries was and still is ordinary opera (it is funny in this regard to think about the combination of the poor content, often a fragment of bones, and the prized container in which it is located). This is done for two main reasons: honor-making, and to transform the romantic and nostalgic value of the relic into something material and actual: money

To show and to be.

William James writes “*It is clear that between what man calls me and what he simply calls mine, the line is difficult to draw*”.

No one in today’s society now owns anything, we live in a consumer society, the word contains in itself its meaning of short-term maturity and immateriality or materiality fled away, which excludes us, to put it as Berger. We think about advertising or pornography, for the viewer that is real, and this is enough to make the user part of that

experience. In his “Nudes” Ruff did nothing but print gigantic Jpeg copies of pornographic images. When looked at from close they reveal the illusion of their existence, the veil of eroticism disappears to leave place only to a heap of pixels.

From ancient times, during which man began to communicate through language, orality and then writing have become the main means of transmitting knowledge to posterity. To date this primacy has passed to the image, a new system of oral tradition told through images and memories. What we possess, which we have owned, makes us memorable and therefore real in a society devoted to consumption, precisely to dematerialization. Infact our online profiles are like perfect relics of our stories and our interests, so that they can become for the anthropologists of the future a considerable source of information. The same chronology of our Browser is to be considered a kind of unwitting memorial that we are still writing.



Conclusion

I read some time ago of an advertisement addressed to users addicted to the smartphone; the object on sale was a piece of plastic shaped as a mobile phone, advertised as a sort of Linus' blanket among them and a nervous breakdown among us and the Rest of the world. The blanket of Linus: The Mystical object par excellence, impregnated with the insecurities of the owner to assume, at rest, the likeness of his thumb.

Here is the answer to the fateful question: What is a relic today?The relic is a simple transitional object, it is a self dislocated from the body. It represents us and at the same time something else, what we would like to be and represent to others in the physical form (and not) of what we love, our memories and at the same time, itself, that which materially is, with all the semantic meanings proper of the object subject of dicussion.

The funny thing is that all the effort used in leaving the trace of us will mostly prove vain. It shows us biology with the inevitable death of the body, and also history, and our short memory.The materiality is destined to the debacle, and as an illustrator I must accept that what I do is useless. Its usefulness acts on a short-range, on the people who have come into contact, it is an ethereal immateriality but it exists, just as much as our thoughts and what happened in the past do.

Here is a new return to the concept of indexicality, the relic is memory, but only a personal memory. Prudence is not due to the mysterious

and collective fear of fire but to the experience of burning. The risk of creating generic dictates is to end up venerating idols, and so, often, it becomes an act that loses meaning: the prayer to a god who “must” fulfil desires, smiling selfies made in the moments of sadness, the major holidays, the objects of a dead relative accumulated in the attic and all those files stored in the Mac (but all those photos, all the same, who will ever watch them?).

I believe that our impulse to accumulation is actually a will of affirmation. I’m there, I’ve existed, here’s the evidence. And if the predefined path on conveyor belts to the destruction faced by the goods of Michel Landy was a path to the annulment? *“It’s like my own funeral,”* Landy said at the time, *“but I’m alive to watch it. I’m still alive.”*

Death, the very definition of a relic would not make sense if not approached to that of death (obviously considered as a generic way,

as the death of a situation for example.) But back to Linus and his phobias, they will never die, he is himself and at the same time his own relic. A very important advantage, desirable and obtainable, obtained.

The creation of a social profile makes us immortal and it’s self-managed, by us. The aftermath of our profile will remain on the web forever, contrary to our tangible assets subjected to the corrosion of the age. By the end of the century, on Facebook there will be more dead than alive. The profile becomes “commemorative”, a memory for those who still remain alive. Sharing (on social but also by word of mouth) constitutes the last chance with which we can claim to have existed in the world. Our presence is defined by the other, without which we would not actually have a way to be and exist.

The relics are us, the cluster of what we loved, hated and thought. Dematerialized, useless, dead, but existed through the thousand



connections and implications we had on the rest. The relic today as in the past is nothing more than a proof, I am the proof of my own existence.

“Then I reflect that all things happen,

happen to one,

precisely now.

Century follows century,

and things happen only in the present.

There are countless men in the air, on land and at sea,

and all that really happens

happens to me.”

Jorge Luis Borges



Appendices

Poll - Meetings

The questions are based on the concept of the relic in our modern society.

A relic is a surviving memorial of something past, therefore any tangible or intangible object (a photograph, a post on Facebook, a song, a clavicle, a ring, a children’s book, etc.) that talks about something else, something past that lives through that object that is so important for you.

Your answers will be part of my thesis and could be published, but don’t worry, the fields are not required, so feel free to fill in as many as you want.

- What do you associate to the word “relic”?
- What is “your” relic? Why? Where is your relic right now?
- Why did you choose to fill in the questionnaire?
- Name? Upload a picture of you

What do you associate to the word “relic”?

“To the concept of relic I associate photos of the past and personal objects of people dear to me.”

“A relic for me is something that causes me a memory.”

“To me a relic is a historical object not of inestimable value that has distinguished itself over time depending on the type of object. There are various types of relics, as I said before, there are historical ones linked to years now far by us, dating back to some civilizations from customs and habits different from ours; There are religious ones that, as the adjective itself says, are related to the various religious cults around the world. “

“It reminds me of the Saints, because to associate it to a memory I would still use the word ‘ ‘ memory’ ‘; it is said ‘ photo souvenir ‘ ‘ or I take a ‘ souvenir of that place that I had visited ‘ ‘. On the contrary in Italy the cult of the relics of the Saints is widespread.

“To the concept of relic I associate memories in general”

“I think about something sacred or religious”

“Memories.”

“To the concept of relic I associate something sacred, precious, something to protect.”

“To the concept of relic I associate any object, more commonly material, that refers to someone who has somehow left a sign with his/her existence through works and other; The relic can also gain value of witness, when it remains the only thing that is left of a given person or event. “

“I associate the image of an ancient, precious, often lost object. Something with a value. “

“For me the relic constitutes a memory, it is the most precious treasure that a person can cherish”

“The first thing that comes to my mind are saints’ relics, those in churches and the bones. The relic for me has a negative meaning, because it makes me think of a form of people’s attachment to something they consider sacred, unchangeable, unassailable. A sort of conservatism that prevents you from going further, a strong bond with the past that restricts freedom. “

“Mystic, vessel.”

“I must tell you that until I have read your beautiful and original way of giving a meaning to the word “relic” I always tied this term to an object of religious/Christian matrix. Nothing more! “

“For me the Relic embodies the concept of memory, what remains and we pass on to future generations, a trace that testifies that we have existed and survives.”

“The relic, for me, is something that I associate with the Christian religion and I worry a bit, because it always has to do with death and the occult.”

“Something spiritually very important, whose closeness allows me to live a special moment that I have already experienced. There is also something that leads me to live the future, but I think, I still cannot describe it well”

“To the concept of relic I associate physicality, tactile, visual, even olfactory contact with something that has belonged or is part of a person that for me represents something important”

“.. For me “relic” has a meaning mainly linked to religion; The remnants of a body or even of an object belonging to a saint are considered singularly relic; and reliquary a set of mortal remains, (even of a whole body) belonging to a person deemed holy and objects in some way linked to her... for the Christian faith The Holy Shroud is believed to be the greatest relic..... but for me it can be considered a relic also an object that belonged to loved ones that are no longer there, bound to their memory and preserved just like a

“ To me a relic is a treasured object which is used to symbolise or represent an individual or group identity/ideology.

“Things that belonged to people who are no longer there”

“The relic, for me, is a symbol.”

“Objects or parts of Saints’ body or clothes.

“For me the relic is an object that constitutes an indelible memory.”

“For me the concept of relic is associated with the idea of sacred, untouchable.”

“To the concept of a relic I associate an object that reminds me of who is preserved in my heart”

“Something Ancient and Precious”

“However, an object that has a meaning for a person and therefore to be protected.”

“The Relic for me is an object to which each of us is bound for a particular reason and which instils strength and hope.”

“Emotional Memories”

“To the concept of relic I associate something precious and that is far away in time.”

“For me it must be an object that reminds you of a person, perhaps because I am too attached to the concept of religious relic that reminds a Saint, churches’ , ex voto”

relic. “

“I perceive the relic as something that, in addition to the memory of what it was, also becomes a symbol and testimony of something lost.”

“Sacred objects belonging to the liturgical environment of high artistic value, finds and documents of the past that must be carefully guarded as testimonies and historical sources, memorabilia of childhood.”

“To the concept of relic I associate something that I consider important not on a material but emotional level. As if you had incorporated an important memory to protect. “

“For me the relic is the merely material means for the consecration of the past. Nothing spiritual, it means. That resides only in the most hidden meanderings of our romantic memory dedicated to nostalgia. Simply a thread, a connection between what it was and what it is. It is what immobilizes the moments, broadens them and challenges eternity in its continual race towards the inexorable. Like all material things though, it has the great limit of the transience. How do you win? “Ars Longa vita brevis” said the Latins. You don’t win it simply, it would be a war lost at the very beginning. But defying it is the greatest proof that life presents us with, which is worth fighting for. The Faustian spirit that ancient imperatives every man possesses: to leave a memory of oneself even knowing that, though he will live longer than us, he is destined to perish. The solution, if it exists, is to enjoy the show, with the awareness of the finite order of human things. “

What is “your” relic? Why? Where is your relic right now?

Anonymous

“For me relics are manifold, almost all of them are and have been the dearest people to me and those who I have been close to during my life. So often they are the photos or written phrases that have remained as a reminder that sometimes it is necessary to get afloat. So I often need to look at my relics or spend some time thinking about the days and moments so dear that today are emphasized by remembrance. My relics mostly are at my house. But I have some that I carry with me, in my wallet for example, or I have kept them in the places that lead me to their memory.”

Anonymous

“My relic is my Bible. Because my mom gave it to me. And inside I put the photos of the people that are dearest to me (mom, Grandpa Matteo and Grandma Maria). Another relic is Grandpa Matteo’s necklace. The Bible is on my nightstand, while about the necklace I usually wear it, right now it is in a drawer.”

Anonymous

“So, I began to reflect and for a while I remained of the conviction of not having real relics (in the sense that you mean).. Then, when I opened my wallet, I realized I did have this relic... It will seem bizarre but in the wallet (now for over 10 years) I have kept a small bone of buffalo skin... The last my first dog had played with-as during the last days of his life he could not chew anymore but he always kept it between the paws. As you picture, it was a very strong bond with my dog. We grew up together and although it has been a long time, and today I have two other dogs that I adore, keeping that bone makes me feel that I have never lost it completely. Well! The fact denounce a serious childishness and little sense of reality?! I hope i will not!.. But this is my “precious” relic.”

Anonymous

“I have two relics: my great-grandmother’s country house and maternal grandparents’ one near the sea because both bring me back to my childhood and to moments of game with my cousins. The house in the country is located in Casalvecchio Siculo (a small village in the province of Messina) and the other is located in Sperone (a little village of Messina).”

Anonymous

“They are the tickets made by my daughters for Mother’s Day; Because they do not have an economic value but for a mom they are worth more than diamonds, I keep them in a box with other tickets and various items related to them.”

Anonymous

“My relic is a choker that my mother gave me for my birthday, the last one where she was next to me and she told me that it was her last gift because she obviously had a bad feeling. I always keep it at hand because when I look at it I feel my mother next to me and this gives me strength to face the obstacles that life inevitably puts before us.”

Anonymous

“I do not possess relic-objects, if I orient myself towards intangible things-going beyond point 1-the relic could be represented by the values of life (humility, transparency of the soul, respect for the neighbour, etc.)

In point 1, I specify an object containing a symbol that has meaning for a person and therefore to be protected. “

Anonymous

“It’s a bracelet I’ve always brought with me since I was a girl. She was my maternal grandmother’s, whom I never knew and I bear her name. She died when my mother was young. I seem to have her and my dear Mamma close to me. “

Anonymous

“In my case” relics “are my father’s work tools that I keep in my garage and that bring me back him to mind, a humble worker who bend over backward to put food on the table.

Whenever I use his tools it is as if I had him beside me to give me his inevitable hints and reproaches. “

Anonymous

“ For example I have at home the urn containing my father’s ashes. Then I got on the table a dear friend’s photo who died five years ago. “

Anonymous

“The tattoo made with my sister, because it reminds me of all the moments, both beautiful and ugly that we spent together, reminds me of our relationship and also the moments spent in general in our family”

“In my body, right arm”

Anonymous

“I consider relics places that have been part of my childhood. When I happen to travel the roads leading to my old school is like a dip in the past, suddenly I am little girl again”

Anonymous

“I think I have not a single relic but many and various kinds are such because they remind happy or unpleasant moments, moments of independence but also achievements. They are found in many places but mostly in my diary in my room and in my purse”

Anonymous

“Early childhood photos and drawings, because they are the only memories of a forgotten past. At home, in boxes containing several albums, a sort of “caskets”.

Anonymous

“My relic is the Florence and the Machine CD I bought at Greenwich in 2015. I was wandering on my own in the streets looking for somewhere to eat and came across this tiny shop that had everything I ever wanted. There was a dreamlike atmosphere in there and that CD reminds me of it. It’s on the shelf in my room.”

Anonymous

“A box containing old Polaroids, old drawings, birthdays cards, books, the sachets taken in particular places, brooches, coins of many nations (my grandfather’s collection), an old notebook, my grandmother’s rings and some stamps. Another relic for me is the crime book collection I own in my bookshelf. Woe to those who touch them (laughter). It is in my room, in my house (but I brought some books to Milan when I moved).”

Anonymous

“It is a paper knife that my grandfather Rodolfo has done personally, blade and handle, and that has always been present in my life. I did not know this grandfather well, I was too young when he died, but it is a handcrafted object well done, which exudes love for a craft work done well. It is in my home and has followed me everywhere since childhood “

Giorgia

“My relics are: The scent I felt as a child in my grandmother’s backyard because it reminds me of the good moments I have spent with my family; A small flask with a message inside because every time I read it I remember the importance of those who wrote it; Some colored pencils that I often saw my mum use when I was a child, and that remind me of the good moments we spent together and the birth of my passion for art; I often feel the scent of my grandmother’s backyard in the air; as for the little flask, I wear it every time I feel I

need it; The pencils are stored in one of my shelves and I use them only for the most important drawings to me.”

Carmela

“My relics are represented by a book that belonged to my mother on the duties of the Bride (year 1930!) that sincerely do not differ so much from those that should still be today.... from a tape engraving in which is the voice of my father and a song Played by him on piano and other small objects belonged to loved ones. These objects transmit me positive emotions, love feelings mixed to healthy regrets of fond memories that please the soul!”

Carla

“My relic is my husband’s ashes. I consider it a relic because, even after a process of combustion, the nature fails to destroy everything, but leaves a physical residue, that residue remains an important link between matter and emotion. It is in my house on a piece of furniture inside a beautiful leaf-shaped urn especially made by one of my friends who is a sculptor.”

Daniele

“I think that the words contained in the books we read or in the letters and diaries we write have a strong evocative power and of transmission of memory, and that they can be considered relics. The words speak with the voice of those who write about their story, but at the same time, they establish an intimate and personal relationship with those who receive them, constituting a unique experience that changes from person to person.”

Carmen

“Beatles in general from movies to songs. When I discovered them I was a little girl and I felt awkward and unhappy, different from the others. It is as if a breach was opened in a joyful world, rich in colors

with beautiful sounds that gave me energy and comforted me. A world in which I felt perfectly comfortable, it marked my rebirth... As the encounter with the monolith of 2001 odyssey in space. Where are the Beatles? In the Ether.”

Domenico

“I cherish the photographs of my parents in the most important place for my spirituality, namely the Gohonzon. (The object of worship of my religion) Relics, for me, are also music from the period of my adolescence, some books; back then I believed it was possible to realize my ideals (a free life for example). The Banco del Mutuo Soccorso (a band) On the Road, (a book) Pigs with Wings (a book) or Guccini (a singer-songwriter), which remind me of the youthful dreams, that have been frustrated and that are linked to an ideology and ideas that unfortunately are only part of the past.”

Daniela

“Pictures of my parents, and grandparents, and great grandparents. They are the foundations on which my life is based, for good and evil, my roots. They are in my house in a very visible dedicated place.”

Katia

“A necklace of the paternal grandmother of which I bear the name but that I have never known. It’s in my house.”

Maria

“My relic is the engagement ring that my father gave to my mother. It’s a memory of both of us seeing that two are no more. An object that symbolizes their union that has given birth to our family. Their “relic” is now in my house.”

Attilio

“I cherish many “relics” of the past, in some cases also not mine, with the hope that I may, one day, put them in line with a brief

explanation of their value. But if the sense of the investigation is related to a relic in particular I find it hard to identify one. I do not like to bind myself to people or situations of the past, and therefore not even to particular memories. The only exception is my wife and, if we want to force a bit the sense of the answer, the “relic” could be the first ring, of modest value, being sixteen years old, which I gave her the day after my declaration of love and that she still retains. I remember that I bought the ring on the occasion of a trip to Lipari with my parents and I was traveling on a cloud... Its modest value increases its significance as in the evangelical affair of the Pence to the temple of the poor old woman.”

Philippe

“A shred of doctor Moscati’s white coat. I’ve casually got to know his story and it really struck me. It is in a drawer in my home.”

Enrico

“I don’t usually keep relics indefinitely. The other day I lost a wallet in which I kept, as a relic, some pictures of my parents.”

Isaak

“My relic would be my camera bag, since it is something which I treasure and carry around with me at all times, and I believe is associated with my identity. My relic is right by my side.”

Alessia

“I jealously cherish some of my friends ‘ scribbles in a special folder, because I like it when people see me draw and try to express themselves and have fun, they make me feel appreciated on my work because that’s what I would like to arouse in the people, that creativity that each has, that little moment of freedom. Another thing I never take off even to get me a shower is my ring because it reminds me of the bond I have with my boyfriend, sometimes when I’m down I just simply watch it to reminisce all those happy moments... but sad

, for the awareness of not being able to relive them, but that I will jealously cherish in my heart”

Michela

“I can seem trivial but it’s my computer. I have it since I was 11 years old and now I’m 18, seven years of my life are enclosed in this PC: all my memories are “stored” in the gallery, all my ideas in the documents, all the stories and drafts for the novels in the application “Text edit”. This computer has seen a lot. And inside of it there’s all myself.

I keep it in front of me. Sometimes the most “valuable” things are better to be kept handy. “

Angelica

“My relic is a rose that I detached from a crown of roses when my father left, I have been keeping it for 7 years now and it is next to a photo hanging in my room”

Giada

“Materially speaking I have no relics, but in relation to the previous answer I could tell you that for me it could be MEMORIES, for example, the memories of special people are indelible traces on the road of life and must be cherished preciously”

“They are in my soul.”

“Ask why? Perhaps because I am a romantic and also because I was fortunate to have fantastic memories. “

Emanuela

“The photos are” my relics “because within them are enclosed all my memories”

“ I can find my relics in the photo albums, in the Gallery of my mobile phone”

Cristina

“I actually don’t have a real relic, but I can say I have a very indispensable object for me, since I can’t stand without it: my smartphone.”

“Being inseparable from my “relic” I have it with me.”

Why did you decide to fill out the questionnaire?

“I decided to fill out the questionnaire to give satisfaction to my human root”

“I filled out the questionnaire because it was a further opportunity to remember my parents.”

“I answered the questionnaire because the questions and the topic that at first impact might seem a “trivial” test (allow me the term that does not want to have any negative meaning) to collect statistical information.. “Compels” the person to whom it is directed to ponder, to dig through memories, to discover something more about himself. So I thank you for having made me remember/discover that I have this “relic”... You have chosen a deep and intelligent work topic.”

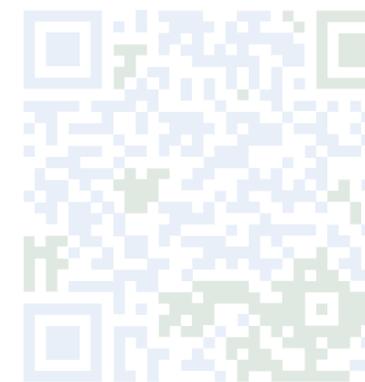
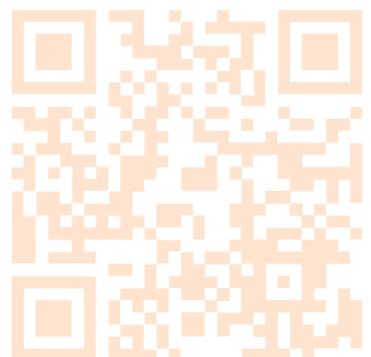
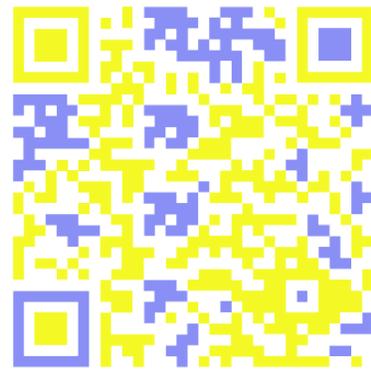
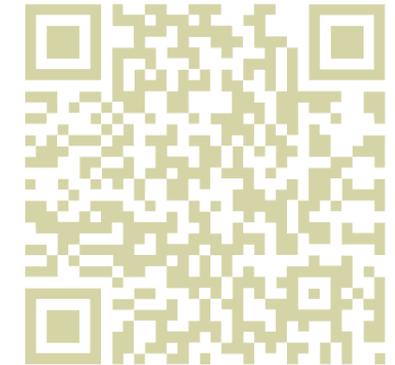
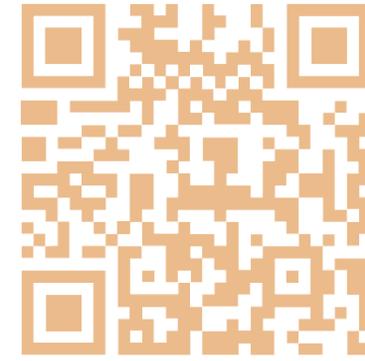
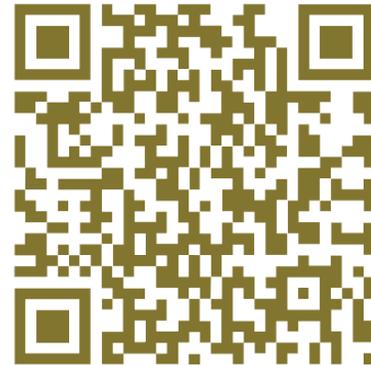
“I find that this is a very interesting topic because it is about memory and in a society like the one we live in, so fast that it seems ready to forget everything, where nothing seems to remain, I think it is important to talk about it and I am happy to have given a modest contribution.”

“Initially it seemed like a very personal request to give an answer immediately. Then I processed, thinking about multiple times and getting to the conclusion that I possess many material relics (i.e. objects) but also intangible (like more than a song, a couple of science fiction tales, memories that you can never forget). In the end

I decided to answer the questionnaire, and I hope I did not arrive too late, because I had never thought about this topic and I would like to know what relics are for other people.”

“It is interesting to know that value can take the word “relic” both on a personal level and on a global level and what meanings are conferred to it. “

**Visual
Appendices**



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