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# The tradition of Brandi

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## **Abstract**

*This essay embraces an idea from Giulio Carlo Argan that identifies transparency as both a component and a way of reading the writings of Cesare Brandi. Beginning with the entry for the item “Restoration” in the Enciclopedia Universale dell’Arte which is translated into Spanish in this issue of Conversaciones..., it then proposes a transparent reading of other texts by Brandi on restoration, at times finding comfort in writings more dedicated to aesthetics. Two pairs of themes seem to clearly emerge from this methodology: reintegration, and, in transparency, the potential unity of the work of art; the relationship between the humanistic and the scientific disciplines and, reading in transparency, the possibility of founding a theory of restoration. Finally, the theme of transparency opens onto reflections on space, or rather on space, and – once again in transparency – on objects. This last reflection constitutes the element for a possible line of flight, a way out of the work of Cesare Brandi, but in order to continue to practice the tradition of Cesare Brandi.*

**Keywords:** *Transparency, potential unity, theory of restoration, space, Object Oriented Ontology.*

*Here waiting means: keeping your eyes open  
and trying to find in what has already been thought  
the unthinking that is still hiding there.  
(Heidegger, 1991a: 93)*

## The theory of restoration in transparency

*This is enough to explain the lack of an ostentatious systematic debate which then subsequently evolves into a pressing dialectic, expressed in the best possible way as an alternative to dialogue, which surprises the idea as it is being produced, and, as if superimposing transparent layers, continually takes up and transcends the previous propositions over the subsequent ones<sup>1</sup> (Argan, 1981: 292).*

In reference to Brandi's *Carmine*, Giulio Carlo Argan expresses a level of appreciation which, as many scholars mention,<sup>2</sup> can be extended to the works of Cesare Brandi in their entirety, especially his texts on aesthetics. And Brandi himself gives us confirmation in his preface to the second edition of *Carmine*:

*In this text lies the nucleus of his thought on art, and the author has never found it necessary to contradict this nucleus at later stages, even if he believes that his viewpoint has become progressively broader. Within the phenomenology of artistic creation which he aimed to advance, it was inevitable that as each specific area was investigated, problems singular only to that field would arise<sup>3</sup> (Brandi, 1962: 8).*

It is true that the aim is not to differentiate between the various arts – “we will never manage to count the Muses exactly”<sup>4</sup> (Brandi, 1992: 164) – but to “surprise the genesis of art in the march of consciousness”<sup>5</sup> (D'Angelo, 2006: 84). On the other hand, the approach of this theory, which from time to time broadens its gaze, juxtaposes thoughts and consequences derived from interminable study; at each new moment of solidification in a text it displays its previous acquisitions as if repositioned within a different organization.

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<sup>1</sup> Original quotation: “Questo basta a spiegare la mancanza di un'appariscente sistematica della trattazione ed il suo fluido svilupparsi in un'incalzante continuità dialettica, espressa come meglio non si potrebbe nell'alternativa del dialogo, che sorprende l'idea nel suo prodursi, e continuamente assume e trascende, come in una sovrapposizione di strati trasparenti, le proposizioni precedenti nelle successive”.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. as Luigi Russo writes in *Prefazione al Carmine*: “A whole series of reasons, (...) then, propitiate the conclusion that while the system of Brandi's aesthetics is strongly centered around *Carmine* while remaining open to continuous, progressive acquisitions (...). This tension, this state of careful vigilant research, this constant struggle is ever-present in Brandi's work that is devoted to an encyclopedia of artwork, rigorously constructed as an experimental planetarium, made dynamic with new data gathered using a wide range of different kinds of inquiry. Brandi has always been true to himself, but at the same time has never repeated himself: he never cheated his readers. In each one of his texts he made new innovations on previous writings, reworking ideas and often going deeper into the theoretical focuses. In reality the whole of Brandi's opus is permeated by a constant and productive “crisis of adjustment” of the conceptual order posited by *Carmine*. (...) This continuous reformulation of his own system in order to offer a theoretical legitimization for the universe of art, ever more comprehensive and detailed; this untiring questioning of his own doctrine to make sure it would be in step with the times and scientifically congruent, is really the most salient characteristic and intriguing aspect of Brandi's thought, his morality as a thinker and his high lesson to humanity.” (Russo, 1992: XXXVII-XXXVIII). On the subject of the relationship between *Carmine* and *Elante*, D'Angelo also observes: “It is not so much a case (...) of extending results already gathered to another object, (...): what he is doing is to return to results from an area with certain conditions, and in doing this, rather than mechanically extending the results, he reorganizes them internally” (D'Angelo, 2006: 85).

<sup>3</sup> Original quotation: “In questo testo sta il nucleo del suo pensiero sull'arte, e a questo nucleo l'autore non ha dovuto mai contraddire in seguito, anche se crede di averne progressivamente ingrandito l'angolo di visuale. Nella fenomenologia della creazione artistica che intesi di elaborare, era inevitabile che ogni specifica trattazione presentasse dei problemi che squisitamente erano peculiari solo del campo volta a volta investigato”.

<sup>4</sup> Original quotation: “non riusciremo mai a contare esattamente le Muse”.

<sup>5</sup> Original quotation: “sorprendere la genesi dell'arte nel cammino della coscienza”.

Precisely because of these constructive characteristics of the theoretical formulation of Brandi, this essay takes into consideration the theory of restoration –as what might also be done for theory in general– as an architecture, or, more to point, as an architecture that is undergoing a restoration project. To do this, let's examine the term "Restauro" from the *Enciclopedia Universale dell'Arte* (Brandi, 1963: 322-332) translated into Spanish in this issue, and using the concept of transparency, that is to say, by superimposing some of the themes found in other theoretical contributions by Brandi on restoration.

Right from the start it is interesting how Argan's appeal to "superimpose transparent layers"<sup>6</sup> –which would allow Brandi to retake or put aside previous issues when dealing with later versions. This immediately brings to mind the process of composition introduced by Carlo Scarpa and others: the superimposition of various levels of representation of one architecture, like a range of alternative solutions for one problem in a project, in order to build a space in which to develop a project which may not be completely bi-dimensional and which would not force the figures to be fused together, but rather to be conscious of their alternate presence.

Transparency is also the main theme in the book by Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky, entitled *Transparency: literal and phenomenal* (Rowe e Slutzky, 1963: 45-54). The first type of transparency, the "literal" type, is obtained simply by using transparent materials, while the second type, the "phenomenal" type, is obtained through a specific "quality of organization" (Rowe, Slutzky, 1963: 46). As Gyorgy Kepes defines it, what we come across in the second case is "a contradiction of spatial dimensions. (...) Transparency (...) implies a broader spatial order. Transparency means a simultaneous perception of different spatial location. Space not only recedes but fluctuates in a continuous activity" (Kepes, 1969: 77). Spaces, then, are presented from time to time as the nearest or the farthest, without cancelling each other out. It is precisely this type of transparency which, in my opinion, seems to characterize on one hand Brandi's creation of theoretical texts, and on the other hand his theory of restoration. Inevitably, the main theme that derives from this hypothesis is that of space and spatial relationships, something which will be dealt with more specifically toward the end of this essay and which will indicate how a transparency can be a possible line of flight.

Looking now at the term "Restauro" in the *Enciclopedia Universale dell'Arte*<sup>7</sup> and intersecting it with some of the issues dealt with elsewhere in Brandi's texts on restoration, two areas immediately emerge. In the *incipit*, the brief introduction before his explication of the concept, restoration is described as an activity intended to "reintegrate vision and enjoyment"<sup>8</sup> and importantly it is founded on "technical and scientific bases"<sup>9</sup> and a "critical and aesthetic methodology"<sup>10</sup> (Brandi, 1963: 322).

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<sup>6</sup> Original quotation: "sovrapposizione di strati trasparenti".

<sup>7</sup> The main structure of the text consists of a short introduction, an exposition of "Concetto del restauro" then "Problemi generali" are set out divided into "La materia dell'opera d'arte", "L'opera d'arte come unità", "Il problema delle lacune", "In quale dei tempi dell'opera d'arte debba cadere l'intervento del restauro", "Problemi del restauro secondo l'istanza storica", "La patina secondo l'istanza storica", "Problemi del restauro secondo l'istanza estetica", "La patina secondo l'istanza estetica", "Il restauro preventivo". This complex structure, organized into sections, is also found in *Teoria del restauro* (Brandi, 1963b; Brandi, 1977) - "Il concetto di restauro", "La materia dell'opera d'arte", "L'unità potenziale dell'opera d'arte", "Il tempo riguardo all'opera d'arte e al restauro", "Il restauro secondo l'istanza della storicità", "Il restauro secondo l'istanza estetica", "Lo spazio dell'opera d'arte", "Il restauro preventivo". Regarding the two specific issues of lacunae and patina, lacunae are dealt with in the section on potential unity and patina in the sections on the historical and the aesthetic cases. With respect to his entry on "Restoration" in the *Enciclopedia Universale dell'Arte* (Brandi, 1963a), the *Teoria del restauro* includes a section dedicated to space in the work of art. There is a subdivision which is evident also in many issues of the *Bollettino dell'ICR*, of the articles: "Il fondamento teorico del restauro" (Brandi, 1950a: 5-12), "Il ristabilimento dell'unità potenziale dell'opera d'arte" (Brandi, 1950b: 3-9), "Il restauro dell'opera d'arte secondo l'istanza della storicità" (Brandi, 1952: 115-119), "Il restauro dell'opera d'arte secondo l'istanza estetica dell'artisticità" (Brandi, 1953: 3-8), "Cosa debba intendersi per restauro preventivo" (Brandi, 1956: 87-92), while the same cannot be said for either of the entry "Restoration" in *Enciclopedia Italiana* (Brandi, 1949: 698-701), or for the essay "Il restauro e l'interpretazione dell'opera d'arte" (Brandi, 1954: 90-100), published in the *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*.

<sup>8</sup> Original quotation: "reintegrare la visione e il godimento".

<sup>9</sup> Original quotation: "basi tecnico-scientifiche".

<sup>10</sup> Original quotation: "metodologia critico-estetica".

In this first part at least two rather significant themes have already been presented, and from these, we can transparently observe, not only at Brandi's other writings, but also at other thematic nucleuses which will aid in my own construction, for my own restoration projects: the concept of reintegration and the relationship of restoration between scientific disciplines and the humanities in the field of restoration.

### Reintegration (and the potential unity of the work of art)

In the text in question, reintegration is considered from the point of view of the reception of the work of art. However, in other cases, it is seen as "the reintegration, in as much as is possible, of a damaged artistic image"<sup>11</sup> (Brandi, 1949: 698; Brandi, 1950a: 5; Brandi, 1954: 90). This distinction is symptomatic of a shift in interest –still partly programmatic but already present because in restoration it is mandatory– from the phenomenology of the creation to that of the reception of the artwork:

*at the end of this panoramic survey of the arts, the author wishes to further deepen the second aspect which regards art, no longer as artistic creation in action, but as it is received as a work of art. And although, from this point of view, the author has already had to discuss the issue within the Teoria del restauro (which is about to be published as a book) where it is presented as an elaboration and a development of the areas anticipated in Carmine, he clearly does not feel that the topic has been fully discussed. That topic implies an examination of the work of art, but this time as communication rather than as creation*<sup>12</sup> (Brandi, 1962: 9).

In restoration, in fact, as the text "Il fondamento teorico del restauro" makes explicit, the *reception* of the work of art has an influence on whether it is considered a "mere historical document"<sup>13</sup> or as a cue to restart the "process of artistic creation which has been interrupted or damaged"<sup>14</sup> (Brandi, 1950a: 6). The reintegration of the image,<sup>15</sup> however, undoubtedly implies an intervention on the work of art itself and not simply of the environment surrounding it,<sup>16</sup> as could also be thought, in order to restore its original appearance and, thus, the enjoyment of it in its surroundings. All this is profoundly problematic: if restoration is "the methodological moment in which the work of art is recognized" (Brandi, 1963a: 17; Brandi, 1963b: p. 34; Brandi, 1977: 6; Brandi, 2005: 48) and, hence, the way in which the work enters into consciousness, it is clear that that this artistic creation which tends to be usurped by the reintegration of the image seems to exist beyond time and beyond the aims of the restoration. But in the item "Restauro" from the *Enciclopedia Italiana di Scienze*,

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<sup>11</sup> Original quotation: "reintegrazione, quanto più è possibile approssimativa, di una mutila immagine artistica".

<sup>12</sup> Original quotation: "alla fine della ricognizione panoramica sulle arti, l'autore intende approfondire il secondo aspetto che compete all'arte non più come creazione artistica in atto, ma in quanto viene ricevuta come opera d'arte. E se, da questo punto di vista, l'autore ha dovuto già trattarne nella *Teoria del restauro* (che sta per uscire in volume) dove si presenta come l'elaborazione e lo svolgimento dei cenni già anticipati a questo riguardo nel *Carmine*, non ritiene affatto di aver esaurito l'argomento, che implica l'esame dell'opera d'arte, non più come creazione ma come comunicazione".

<sup>13</sup> Original quotation: "mero documento storico".

<sup>14</sup> Original quotation: "processo interrotto o mutilo della creazione artistica".

<sup>15</sup> Questions relative to the reintegration of the image, starting from "Theoretical foundations of restoration" by C Brandi, are problematized within the work of G. Carbonara. On *Theory of restoration* Carbonara writes "between the lines, there is interest for a type of intervention which develops the "potentiality" of the damaged image according to "authentic testimonies" and suggestions "secreted" by the fragment itself, figuratively speaking, which are not arbitrary but neither squalid, simplistic or casual" (Carbonara, 1976: 28).

<sup>16</sup> This seems to allude to those measures which, intervening in the space between artwork and beholder, influence in "determining the conditions necessary to appreciate the work of art" (Brandi, 1963: 85; Brandi, 1977: 57).

*Lettere e Arti*, where there is a discussion of the “problem of restoration as a problem of critical philology”<sup>17</sup> (Brandi, 1949: 698), where the “need for absolute respect for history”<sup>18</sup> (Brandi, 1949: 698) meets the “need to lose as little as possible of the sense of the image as *figurative*”<sup>19</sup> (Brandi, 1949: 698), Brandi claims that, when this type of restoration is brought into its own area of aesthetics, the need arises “to keep any integration within the strictest limitations, with practical implementations that are recognizable to everyone, so as not to use the hypothetical reintegration to usurp the authenticity which belongs only to the ways in which it was created”<sup>20</sup> (Brandi, 1949: 698). Reintegration, then, though it is hypothetical, is not completely prohibited, but instead it is limited and recognizable, even if it is clearly stated that “restoration is not creation, and restorers are not artists – firstly they are critics, then technicians”<sup>21</sup> (Brandi, 1949: 698). In “Il fondamento teorico del restauro”, the issue becomes more precise. Regarding the aesthetics of the object, “whatever damage to that which is represented must be remedied” provided that the intervention does not seek to make itself “independent of history”<sup>22</sup> (Brandi, 1950a: 11). In this case there is once again emphasis on of the importance of the possibility of distinguishing between a new contribution and that which was pre-existent; moreover, the object of restoration comes to be the “representative unity of the object”<sup>23</sup> (Brandi, 1950a: 12), or another way of saying the potential unity of the work of art. Representative unity, however, is not to be confused with the phenomenal unity of the object, with its materiality.

Before going any further, it is important to remember that Brandi, in the writings being analyzed, distinguishes between “a restoration of industrial artifacts and a restoration of a work of art”<sup>24</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 15); he affirms that the first type of restoration involves re-establishing the “functionality of the product”<sup>25</sup> while the second type, apart from architecture where functionality is seen as a “secondary or concomitant aim of restoration, primary restoration is that which regards the work of art as a work of art”<sup>26</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 15). For a work of architecture, then, foreseeing a primary restoration seems also to foresee a “secondary restoration” which occurs along with the primary, and is designed to re-establish functionality. After all, architecture is accustomed to the introduction of problematics in the theoretical system of Brandi and in *Eliaante* architecture was given the important task of driving renewed reflection on the theme of how an object is constituted, its memory and the operation that allows the artist to develop an *epochè* or to use the Husserlian term, a reduction through which the bonds between the object and reality are loosened. The choices which are made are the outcome (or result) of this operation.

*the constituted object is an image and not in any sense a duplicate of the object; within it the object is cognitive and figurative substance, according to the use which consciousness makes of the image. But this dialectical nature*

<sup>17</sup> Original quotation: “problema del restauro come un problema di critica filologica”.

<sup>18</sup> Original quotation: “l’esigenza di un rispetto storico assoluto”.

<sup>19</sup> Original quotation: “l’esigenza di perdere quanto meno è possibile del senso della *figuratività* dell’immagine”.

<sup>20</sup> Original quotation: “la necessità di contenere qualsiasi integrazione nei limiti più ristretti e con attuazioni pratiche sempre per tutti riconoscibili, così da non fare usurpare, alla reintegrazione ipotetica, l’autenticità che solo spetta ai modi della creazione”.

<sup>21</sup> Original quotation: “Il restauro non è creazione, e i restauratori non sono artisti: sono in primo luogo critici, e in secondo luogo tecnici”.

<sup>22</sup> Original quotation: “indipendente dalla storia”.

<sup>23</sup> Original quotation: “unità rappresentativa dell’oggetto”.

<sup>24</sup> Original quotation: “un restauro relativo a manufatti industriali e un restauro relativo all’opera d’arte”.

<sup>25</sup> Original quotation: “la funzionalità del prodotto”.

<sup>26</sup> Original quotation: “scopi secondari o concomitanti al restauro, il restauro primario è quello che riguarda l’opera d’arte in quanto tale”.

*of the constitution of the object is not extinguished in the formulated image: its structure remains, it will always be reachable and at times the negative elements will prevail; at other times the positive elements will prevail*<sup>27</sup> (Brandi, 1992a: 97).

In other words, the result of the choices that are made.

While this is the phenomenology of the artistic creation in general, things are not exactly the same for creation in architecture. Architecture, in fact as Diodato put it, “has no object”<sup>28</sup> (Brandi, 1992b: 154). Eftimio-Brandi has a response to this new problem:

*Art is image, and although I have resolutely affirmed that for every work of art the constitution of the object is preliminarily insurmountable, I certainly never intended to say that we were referring to a natural object, that could get into our consciousness just as it is, like a nail in the stomach. It is consciousness which has to adapt itself to the image and then takes the image as its symbol*<sup>29</sup> (Brandi, 1992b: 157).

This marks the start of the formulation of the image. So, if it is true that there is no object for architecture, things start from the necessity of resolving a problem, for example a shelter such as “in that need (...) you have no more and no less than a *schema*, which is not as yet a concept or an image. It is the nucleus of the cognitive substance which seeks above all to convert itself into figurativity”<sup>30</sup> (Brandi, 1992b: 157). Before the primitive shelter was built, Eftimio-Brandi continues, neither image nor concept existed; only an “imprecise intentionality”<sup>31</sup> within consciousness, which “pushed from the inside, with no words”<sup>32</sup> (Brandi, 1992b: 158).

The schema, or *pre-conceptual schema*<sup>33</sup> is situated outside of the process of artistic creation, although it participates in that process, and it makes it possible to generate different conformations and forms.

The architectural forms to which we are referring, therefore, are generated by the *schema*, reliable proof of a response to the requirements: they are there to build that world of objects which can also in their turn be constituted,<sup>34</sup> exactly like Morandi’s bottles, and become, through the formulation of the image, *astanza*. Returning to a theme which had been put

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<sup>27</sup> Original quotation: “l’oggetto costituito, ossia un’immagine che non è affatto un duplicato dell’oggetto, ma in cui l’oggetto è sostanza conoscitiva e figuratività, a seconda dell’uso stesso che dell’immagine farà la coscienza. Ma tale dialetticità della costituzione di oggetto non si estingue nell’immagine formulata, ne rimane la struttura, che sarà sempre reperibile e in cui potranno a volta a volta prevalere di elementi negativi o quelli positivi”.

<sup>28</sup> Original quotation: “non ha oggetto”.

<sup>29</sup> Original quotation: “L’arte è immagine, e se io risolutamente ho affermato che preliminarmente insormontabile per ogni opera d’arte è la costituzione di oggetto, non ho certo mai inteso dire che si trattava di un oggetto naturale, che si introduceva tal quale nella coscienza come un chiodo nello stomaco. È la coscienza che si plasma a se stessa nell’immagine e assume allora l’immagine a suo simbolo”.

<sup>30</sup> Original quotation: “in quel bisogno (...) hai né più né meno che uno *schema*, il quale non è ancora concetto e non è ancora immagine. È il nucleo della sostanza conoscitiva la quale cerca prima di tutto di convertirsi in figuratività”.

<sup>31</sup> Original quotation: “imprecisata intenzionalità”.

<sup>32</sup> Original quotation: “premeva dall’interno, senza parole”.

<sup>33</sup> “The schema is the first selection made by the referent, and for that reason it is pre-conceptual” (Brandi, 1998: 38). Quoted original: “Lo schema è la prima selezione tratta dal referente, e proprio come tale è preconcettuale”.

<sup>34</sup> “Given that the object, once considered in its phenomenal appearance, is animate or inanimate, whether a work of nature or a work of art, it has the same generic possibility of election” (Brandi, 1992a: 116). Quoted original: “In quanto all’oggetto, una volta considerato nella sua apparenza fenomenica, sia animato o inanimato, opera della natura o opera d’arte, ha una stessa generica possibilità d’elezione”.

aside, the intervention of “restoration should aim to re-establish the potential unity of the work of art, as long as this is possible without committing artistic or historic forgery, and without erasing every trace of the passage through time of the work of art”<sup>35</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 17; Brandi, 1963b: 36; Brandi, 1977: 8).

This second axiom of Brandi’s theory (the first one claims that “only the material of the work of art is restored”<sup>36</sup>) brings into play some of the questions at the base of the whole project of restoration, intended neither as a search for the origin, nor as an expression of fantasy.

“Unity” is a term, we should say it immediately, that “comes only «a posteriori», when the artwork is in the world and its reception occurs within a consciousness”<sup>37</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 20). This means that neither the artist’s will nor the vicissitudes which might have modified or partialized the work are under discussion here. What counts is the way in which recognition comes about, or how the work is received, and for Brandi this reception is unitary. Unity can however be achieved in two ways: the unity of the whole or that of the total. Brandi assigns the work of art with the quality of wholeness, which does not derive from a sum of independent parts, but rather comes from the symbolic relation between the parts, to the “special attraction”<sup>38</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 20) between the work of art and its fragments.<sup>39</sup> In this way, “even if it is physically fragmented”,<sup>40</sup> the work “will continue to exist as a potential whole in each of its fragments. This potential will be achieved in direct proportion to what has survived of the original artistic features on each fragment”<sup>41</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 22; Brandi, 2005: 57). Furthermore, in cases where the work “has been physically broken up, one will have to attempt to develop the original potential unity held within each fragment. This effort is proportional to the extent that the original form is still preserved within the fragments themselves”<sup>42</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 22). A further specificity regards the fact that the work of art does not possess an organic and functional unity which comes from the world of nature, since as *astanza*, it finds itself apart from the world, “closed within itself”<sup>43</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 21). The example of the cat comes up here<sup>44</sup> (there is the example of the man with only one arm visible in the representation given in *Teoria del restauro*). The cat has two eyes, and it is of little importance whether they are different-colored or the same because if the cat is painted in profile, it has no eyes since “the painted image represents a cat only for its semantic value, limited due to the fact that the organic and functional unity, in which the cat has two eyes, has not been captured”<sup>45</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 21). As clearly specified in “Il ristabilimento dell’unità

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<sup>35</sup> Original quotation: “restauro deve mirare al ristabilimento dell’unità potenziale dell’opera d’arte, purché sia possibile raggiungere ciò senza commettere un falso artistico o un falso storico, e senza cancellare ogni traccia del passaggio dell’opera d’arte nel tempo”.

<sup>36</sup> Original quotation: “si restaura solo la materia dell’opera d’arte”.

<sup>37</sup> Original quotation: “si pone solo «a posteriori», quando l’opera è nel mondo e ne avviene la ricezione in una coscienza”.

<sup>38</sup> Original quotation: “speciale attrazione”.

<sup>39</sup> About this topic cf. Husserl, 1969: 73-101.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted original: “anche se fisicamente frantumata”.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted original: “dovrà continuare a sussistere potenzialmente come un tutto in ciascuno dei suoi frammenti e questa potenzialità sarà esigibile in proporzione diretta alla traccia formale superstita nel frammento”.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted original: “risulti divisa, si potrà cercare di sviluppare la potenziale unità originaria che ciascuno dei frammenti trattiene proporzionalmente alla sopravvivenza formale ancora recuperabile in essi”.

<sup>43</sup> Original quotation: “chiusa in sé”.

<sup>44</sup> Similar reasoning is found in Kant, who uses the example of a dog (Kant, 1975: 163-170). Viollet-le-duc also considers the formative role of drawing, in connection with a picture by a little boy called Jean: the picture is of a cat moving. Mr Mellinot distorts the drawing, and Mr Majorin/Viollet-le-Duc is made to say: “You cannot see, or better, like many others, you have always seen... with the eyes of one who cannot see. For you a cat is a four-legged feline, with a tail, whiskers and two mobile ears sticking out. If any part of this inventory is missing, for you it is no longer a cat” (Viollet-le Duc, 1992: 7).

<sup>45</sup> Original quotation: nell’immagine dipinta sta come gatto solo per un valore semantico limitatamente a quanto l’immagine ha prelevato non nella sua unità organico-funzionale per cui il gatto ha due occhi.



potenziale dell'opera d'arte" (and in an identical way in Brandi, 1963b: 43; Brandi, 1977: 15), in the image which the work of art formulates, our world of experience appears reduced only to the cognitive function within the figurativeness of the image – every postulate of organic integrity dissolves. "The image is really and only that which appears"<sup>46</sup> (Brandi, 1950b: 4). The potential unity and the unity, termed "intuitive", which is not organic and functional in the work of art, together constitute the guide for the project of restoration, that is to "regulate a praxis"<sup>47</sup> (Brandi, 1950b: 5) which, in carrying out the suggestions implicit in the fragments themselves, must adapt to both historical and aesthetic demands. "A number of principles will result from this, which although they are practical, can no longer be called empirical"<sup>48</sup> (Brandi, 1950b: 6) and these can be summarized as: close-up recognizability; the possibility of substituting material given that it is a support; and facilitation of future interventions.

However, there are cases which "either due to the extremely fragmentary state of the artwork, or to a prevalence for historical over aesthetic interest, the path chosen is not to complete anything"<sup>49</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 23). There are lacunae for which an intervention, even "giving up the development of the residual figurativeness of the image"<sup>50</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 23) is necessary to save the artwork from the "state in which the tradition of the years has left it"<sup>51</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 23). In my view what is of most importance does not appear so clearly in his other texts on restoration: it is here that Brandi claims that the problem of the lacunae "is posed like this, outside of the re-establishment of the potential unity of the image"<sup>52</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 23): it might be deduced that, since the object of restoration is the re-establishment of the potential unity of the artwork, and the theme of the lacuna is outside that object, this does not constitute a real action of "primary restoration".

That said, it is still necessary to understand how potential unity and intuitive unity can be made operative in the project of restoration.

For this, I believe it could be helpful to look to sources beyond Brandi for reference. In 1914, Ortega y Gasset, whom Brandi cited in *Segno e Immagine* on the theme of the dehumanisation of art (Brandi, 2009: 86), he wrote an interesting introduction to the publication of a collection of poems by Moreno Villa, entitled *El Pasajero*, where he discussed the function device of metaphor, using an example by the Catalanian poet López Picó. The work of art is defined as "an object which reunites the double condition of being transparent and of making oneself transpire, rather than something other than oneself" (Ortega y Gasset, 2014: 167) and it is affirmed that "the aesthetic object and the metaphorical object are the same thing, or rather (...) the metaphor is the elemental aesthetic object, the beautiful cell" (Ortega y Gasset, 2014: 164). Starting from the metaphor "the cypress is like the spectre of a dead flame" Ortega y Gasset immediately takes away any doubt that a metaphor can simply be a kind of similarity; the metaphoric element, he explains, is not an assimilation of the real. On the contrary, the operation of the metaphor is

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<sup>46</sup> Original quotation: "nell'immagine che l'opera d'arte formula, questo mondo dell'esperienza appare ridotto unicamente a funzione conoscitiva in seno alla figuratività dell'immagine, ogni postulato di integrità organica si dissolve. *L'immagine è veramente e solamente quello che appare*".

<sup>47</sup> Original quotation: "regolare una prassi".

<sup>48</sup> Original quotation: "Ne discenderanno alcuni principi che per essere pratici non potranno ormai dirsi empirici".

<sup>49</sup> Original quotation: "o per lo stato di frammentarietà estremo dell'opera, o per una prevalenza dell'interesse storico su quello estetico si preferisce non addvenire a completamento alcuno".

<sup>50</sup> Original quotation: "rinunciando a sviluppare la residua figuratività dell'immagine".

<sup>51</sup> Original quotation: "stato in cui la tradizione degli anni l'ha consegnata".

<sup>52</sup> Original quotation: "si pone così, al di fuori del ristabilimento dell'unità potenziale dell'immagine".

*the cancellation of things in what they are as real images. Hitting against each other, their hard scabs are broken and the internal material in its molten state, acquires the soft properties of plasma, which can take on new forms and structures. The cypress thing and the flame thing begin to flow and mutually transmit the ideal tendency of cypress and the ideal tendency of flame*<sup>53</sup> (Ortega y Gasset, 2014: 167).

A new object is born, a new “cypress that, with no absurdity, we can treat as flame”<sup>54</sup> (Ortega y Gasset, 2014: 168). Since Ortega y Gasset had already claimed that “we cannot make an object of our comprehension, and nothing can exist for us if it is not converted to image, concept, idea – I mean if it does not cease to be that which it is, and turn into a shadow or a schema of itself”<sup>55</sup> (Ortega y Gasset, 2014: 160). Within the metaphor the schemas clash; they manage to produce a new scheme and a new object while still maintaining their respective identities.

The work of art as Brandi sees it, the epiphany of the *astanza*, possesses a unity which is always potential because it is based on *flagranza*, and differs from it because, therefore, the potentiality is inscribed in the “furrow of nothing”<sup>56</sup> (Brandi, 1998: 87) which distinguishes it in the Derridian sense, that it within the presence-absence of its origin.<sup>57</sup> “The *difference is inscribed* in the *astanza* as presence-absence, for a *trace* that is only as much as it is not, but divides, detaches, affects: like presence, which does not refer to *ousia*. *Parousia* without *ousia*”<sup>58</sup> (Brandi, 1998: 72).

The re-establishment of the potential unity of the architectural work, therefore, cannot come about from form, which, as in any work of art, is enfolded within itself and unknowable even by its creator: “the work detaches itself from its creator, enclosed and perfect”<sup>59</sup> (Brandi, 1992a: 51). The project of restoration, then, can become workable if one begins from the schema that is to be the result of critical analysis, and therefore intended by the work. Brandi says that metaphor is the mechanism *par excellence* which makes it possible to trace things back to a schema: “that jolt which is produced in the listener when he hears or reads a metaphor is the jump backwards which is made when returning to the pre-conceptual schema, (...) it is a change of level”<sup>60</sup> (Brandi, 1998: 94). If this is so, then the character of the project should be that by which, as Ortega y Gasset would say, the two figures –in our case the work itself and the results of the restoration project– remain opaque to each other but at the same time can “see the image of the cypress through the image of a flame” (Ortega y Gasset, 2014: 167). After a long journey, it looks as if we can see the reconfigured theme of phenomenal transparency.

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<sup>53</sup> Original quotation: “el aniquilamiento de las cosas en lo que son como imágenes reales. Al chocar una con otra rómpense sus rígidos caparazones y su materia interna, en estado fundente, adquiere una blandura de plasma, apto para recibir una nueva forma y estructura. La cosa ciprés y la cosa llama en tendencia ideal llama”.

<sup>54</sup> Original quotation: “ciprés a quien, sin absurdo, podemos tratar como a una llama”.

<sup>55</sup> Original quotation: “no podemos hacer objeto de nuestra comprensión, no puede existir para nosotros nada si no se convierte en imagen, en concepto, en idea, es decir, si no deja de ser lo que es, para transformarse en una sombra o esquema de sí mismo”.

<sup>56</sup> Original quotation: “solco di nulla”.

<sup>57</sup> About the influence of Jacques Derrida, cf. Carboni (2004: 69-78).

<sup>58</sup> Original quotation: “La  *differenza è inscritta* nell’*astanza*, come  *presenza-assenza*, per una  *traccia* che è solo in quanto non è, ma divide, stacca, incide: come  *presenza*, quindi che non rimanda all’*ousia*.  *Parousia senza ousia*”.

<sup>59</sup> Original quotation: “l’opera si stacca dal suo creatore, chiusa e perfetta”.

<sup>60</sup> Original quotation: “Lo scatto che si produce in chi ascolta quando oda o legga una metafora, è il salto indietro che si fa tornando allo schema preconettuale, (...): si cambia di livello”.

In this sense the restoration project brings metaphor into play and says “this is like that”, but also “this is not that” and so allows the work and its beholder to re-recognize the schemas and the schema. In order to give further indications for a possible praxis for a project, it must be said that, although it is true that the schema generates an infinite number of images, it does not generate them all. This reflection is clear in Brandi when he affirms that “there can be conflict between incompatible pre-conceptual schemas”<sup>61</sup> (Brandi, 1998: 94); his example is the metaphor from Claudio Achillini (1574-1640) in his poem *A Luigi XIII dopo la presa della Roccella e la liberazione di Casale* which begins “Sweat, oh fires, to prepare metals” (Achillini, 1910: 54): “the pre-conceptual schema of the fire does not include anything that can sweat: a fire dries, desiccates, burns. So Achillini’s incongruence derives from the incompatibility of the schema of the fire with respect to that of sweat and fatigue: it is a question of incompatibility, not of unlikeliness”<sup>62</sup> (Brandi, 1998: 94).

### The relationship between the scientific disciplines and the humanities (and the possibility of founding a theory of restoration)

*A scientist is overtaken by another who follows him:  
a poet is always literally insuperable.*<sup>63</sup>  
(Ortega y Gasset, 2014: 179)

The theme of the relationship between the scientific disciplines and the humanities is only apparently distant from the themes we have just been looking at. Restoration is an interesting area of dialectic for the two types of discipline, so long as we accept that criticism and aesthetics are part of the world of humanistic disciplines. It is clear how, if we take as an axiom the affirmation that “only the material of a work of art is restored”<sup>64</sup> (Brandi, 1963a: 17; Brandi, 1963b: 35; Brandi, 1977: 7; Brandi, 2005: 49), then this position leads to a crucial role for chemical and physical sciences (and also biology). The study of these disciplines and their applications were in fact the basis for the foundation of the *Regio Istituto Centrale del Restauro*. In Brandi’s report for the inauguration of the *Istituto*, he underlined that “subsidiary research which comes from chemistry and physics, like radiographical surveys, take nothing away from the expertise of the restorer and diminish none of the acumen of the critic: they provide aids which illuminate the activity of one and other”<sup>65</sup> (Brandi, 1941: 51). There is a continuity of this position throughout the writings of Brandi, and the founding aim of the whole theory was to “reach the concept of restoration by rigorous deduction of the very concept of art”<sup>66</sup> (Brandi, 1950a: 6):

*It is an erroneous concept, an illusion linked to old philosophical empiricism, that restoration can be saved from the empiricism of false miracle-workers simply by relying on physics and chemistry, which are handmaidens of restoration and*

<sup>61</sup> Original quotation: “può esserci conflitto fra schemi preconcettuali incompatibili”.

<sup>62</sup> Original quotation: “nello schema preconcettuale del fuoco non c’è che possa sudare, anzi asciugare, seccare, ardere. Perciò l’incongruenza dell’Achillini deriva dalla incompatibilità dello schema del fuoco rispetto a quelli del sudore e della fatica: non si fa questione di inverosimiglianza ma di incompatibilità”.

<sup>63</sup> Original quotation: “Un científico es superado por otro que le sigue: un poeta es siempre literalmente insuperable”.

<sup>64</sup> Original quotation: “si restaura solo la materia dell’opera d’arte”.

<sup>65</sup> Original quotation: “Le ricerche sussidiarie di chimica e di fisica, le ricognizioni radiografiche, non tolgono nulla alla perizia del restauratore e non diminuiscono l’acume del critico, ma costituiscono mezzi illuminanti all’attività dell’uno e dell’altro”.

<sup>66</sup> Original quotation: “giungere al concetto del restauro per rigorosa deduzione dal concetto stesso dell’arte”.

*not its master. Only by using ultraviolet rays and x-rays, macrophotography etc a non-empirical restoration cannot be achieved, if the restoration work is not guided precise critical knowledge*<sup>67</sup> (Brandi, 1954: 95).

To support this, he claims:

*Oscillations in practices, differences in methodology, do not represent an invalidation of the concept of restoration, but the elaboration of that concept through historical concreteness within the speculative process that cannot be stopped for every position which thought can assume. (...) We sustain that the actual practice of restoration must be rigorously deduced from the principle which makes it inseparable from Aesthetics. And here, if that deduction is not possible for all and if it is not completely mandatory, then it must in any case bring a narrowing of the angle of aperture, be comparable if not exactly equal and develop a method which is better than the medieval prescription book, the symbolic *Taccuinum Sanitalis* of the diseased work of art*<sup>68</sup> (Brandi, 1950a: 9).

A method, then, but not a manual of physical remedies to apply to a sick work of art; “if restoration merits the name”<sup>69</sup> he writes “it has to be something different from a medical or surgical procedure on the work of art, it can and must be more than that, because it is interpretation; it is a form of criticism”<sup>70</sup> (Brandi, 1954: 90). So science provides important support, without however losing sight of the fact that restoration exists for critical interpretation, which in turn has its foundation in the recognition of the work of art. And here I wish to underline the fact that Brandi rightly destroys that metaphor so common in architectural conservation where the building is a sick patient and the restorer is a doctor: restoration as medical treatment is a direct consequence of an analysis which regards only physical complaints in architecture: it belittles the area of study and completely loses its relationship with the kind of care connected to dwelling and building of which Martin Heidegger writes (Heidegger, 1991b; Heidegger, 2012).

Let’s return now to the relationship between restoration and the idea of art which “Il fondamento teorico del restauro” examines so precisely. The underpinning question is whether it is possible to have a theory of restoration, or whether instead “every restoration is only good for the era which justifies it and may be dreadful for the following period where things are seen differently”<sup>71</sup> (Brandi, 1950a: 8). If restoration were to its practical work on a theory which is “transient, and therefore fatal for every philosophical system”<sup>72</sup> (Brandi,

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<sup>67</sup> Original quotation: “È concetto erroneo, illusione collegata a vieto empirismo filosofico, che si possa strappare il restauro all’empirismo dei falsi taumaturghi unicamente col sussidio della fisica e della chimica, che sono ancelle e non padrone del restauro. Per il fatto di usare raggi ultravioletti e raggi X, macrofotografia etc. non si riuscirà a fare un restauro non empirico, se l’attività di restauro non sia guidata da una conoscenza critica e precisa”.

<sup>68</sup> Original quotation: “le oscillazioni pratiche, le differenze metodologiche rappresentano non già l’invalidazione del concetto di restauro, ma la elaborazione del concetto attraverso la concretezza storica, nel processo speculativo che è inarrestabile per ogni posizione assunta dal pensiero. (...) Noi sosteniamo che la pratica stessa del restauro deve rigorosamente dedursi dal principio che lo pone inscindibile dall’Estetica. E qui, se la deduzione non potrà essere per tutti e per tutto tassativa, dovrà tuttavia portare a un restringimento dell’angolo di apertura, ottenere una equipollenza se non un’eguaglianza, con la elaborazione di un metodo che non sarà solo il medievale ricettario, il figurato *Taccuinum Sanitalis* dell’opera d’arte malata”.

<sup>69</sup> Original quotation: “se il restauro merita di essere chiamato restauro”.

<sup>70</sup> Original quotation: “e deve essere qualcosa di diverso da un intervento medico o chirurgico sull’opera d’arte, lo può e lo deve essere in quanto interpretazione, forma di critica”.

<sup>71</sup> Original quotation: “che ogni restauro sia solo buono per l’epoca che lo giustifica e magari pessimo per la seguente che la pensi in modo diverso”.

<sup>72</sup> Original quotation: “transeunte come è fatale per ogni sistema filosofico”.

1950a: 8), the result would be the “*theoretical impossibility of restoration*”<sup>73</sup> (Brandi, 1950a: 8) which would be reduced purely to practice. However, as demonstrated by the succession of critical readings which have been made over time, interventions for restoration have always been linked to the way the artwork is seen, even in simple acts like

*changing the roof tiles on a monument or relocating a statue to the height it was modeled for, we cannot fool ourselves that we can restrict our activity merely to practical work (...) even the smallest intervention reveals whether we see the work of art simply as an historical monument, or if instead it is only the artistry of the piece which moves us - or whether we take both these aspects into account, yet intend to give prevalence to the first or to the second; and finally, if this is the case, whether prevalence is given on the basis of personal taste or because of a deduction of the actual concept of art or of history*<sup>74</sup> (Brandi, 1950a: 5).

Therefore, “exactly because we recognize that thought cannot stop itself (...) we have the duty to continue to develop our concepts, unprejudiced by the changes which they could undergo in future speculations which have not yet been thought of”<sup>75</sup> (Brandi, 1950a: 8). So, Brandi’s theory of restoration does not depend upon the contingent theory of aesthetics, which has every right to change, but it is rather founded on the fact that restoration is inextricably linked to aesthetics. This is why it is possible to claim that “only the dissolution of the concept of art can invalidate or cancel the problem of restoration”<sup>76</sup> (Brandi, 1950a: 8). The recognition is the first restoration, when it picks out the artwork to be restored from among the other objects. And, Brandi continues “only the negation of the aesthetic character of the work of art can dissolve the concept of art”<sup>77</sup> (Brandi, 1950a: 9). This whole debate is notoriously complex and unresolved –the end of aesthetics, the death of art<sup>78</sup>– and there is no doubt that the significance of the work of art and its extension needs to be redefined,<sup>79</sup> but this

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<sup>73</sup> Original quotation: “*impossibilità teorica del restauro*”.

<sup>74</sup> Original quotation: “cambiare le tegole ad un monumento o ricollocare una statua all’altezza per cui era stata modellata, noi non possiamo illuderci di contenere la nostra attività nel mero campo della pratica (...) anche il minimo intervento, rivelerà se vediamo nell’opera d’arte un mero monumento storico, o se invece è l’artisticità sola dell’opera che ci muove o se, pur prospettandocela nei due aspetti, intendiamo dare una prevalenza al primo o al secondo; se infine, in questa ultima ipotesi, la prevalenza venga decisa sulla base di un gusto personale o per deduzione del concetto stesso dell’arte o della storia”.

<sup>75</sup> Original quotation: “proprio perché riconosciamo che il pensiero non si può fermare (...) noi abbiamo il dovere di continuare ad elaborare i nostri concetti senza pregiudizio del cambiamento che potranno subire nel futuro di una speculazione non ancora pensata”.

<sup>76</sup> Original quotation: “solo la dissoluzione del concetto dell’arte può invalidare o annullare il problema del restauro”.

<sup>77</sup> Original quotation: “solo con la negazione del carattere estetico dell’opera d’arte si può dissolvere il concetto dell’arte”.

<sup>78</sup> “To top the ludicrous situation, the system of contemporary art sells products with an «enshrinement of everything» which viceversa would require the cancellation of any distinction between art and life with the consequent disappearance of the artist himself along with his market. Artists who transform the events that occur into an aesthetic thing which can be sold come to the back door of the art market and bring in things which were declared unfit for the solemn portal of the aesthetic temple: that is the separation of art and life, (Pedretti, 2007: 53). Quoted original: “Per colmo del grottesco, il sistema dell’arte contemporanea smercia i prodotti di una «sacralizzazione del tutto» che richiederebbe viceversa di cancellare qualsiasi distinzione tra opera e vita con la conseguente sparizione dello stesso artista e del suo mercato. Gli artisti che trasformano le cose che accadono in cosa estetiche che si vendono reintroducono dalla porta di servizio mercantile dell’arte ciò che si proclama essere stato espulso dal solenne portale del tempio estetico: ossia, la separatezza tra opera e vita”.

<sup>79</sup> One only has to recall what Giovanni Carbonara already claimed in *La reintegrazione dell’immagine*: “The impossibility and substantial misunderstanding - especially for architecture which would certainly be left behind methodologically - of a different theory for restoration of monuments and for other types of restoration...” (Carbonara, 1976: 151). Quoted original: “l’impossibilità e la sostanziale equivocità, specie per l’architettura che resterebbe di certo metodologicamente arretrata, di una differente teoria per il restauro monumentale e per le altre forme di restauro...”.

is exactly where it becomes important to read the theory of restoration in transparency and Brandi's theoretical reflections in general. These cannot be dismissed in favor of the presumed *contemporary* nature of thought<sup>80</sup> which considers previous assumptions as completely obsolete, like books on a shelf, whose only use is to look good.

On closer inspection, productive considerations so far have been facilitated by the growth of digital technologies, networks, flows, processes and developments. This still informs the debate to a great extent and has sustained most of those who would reject Brandi's theories. However, although we have gained much in multiplicity, in complexity, which are aspects we must now hold on to, all this has made us lose sight of the objects. It is not clear when the dialectic can end in the relationships between the various actors which include those who put a project into practice, whether it is a restoration or a new building. From my angle of vision, then, if there is no reflection on objects, then architecture and to a greater extent restoration cannot work, or at least they will not work well.

I would also like to add that Brandi's theory of restoration and especially his *Teoria del restauro* has too often been read and accused of being in some way rigidly axiomatic and perceptive. If we go back to the first edition of *Teoria del restauro* it is immediately clear that at the end of the book there was a set of plates that was not reproduced in subsequent editions. The thing that has always attracted my attention is the choice Brandi made to open this section by showing the "back of the thing": there is a plate of the back of Antonello da Messina's painting *Ecce Homo* (Figure 1), and its most famous side does not appear among the images that come after it in the book. And I like to think that this choice contains the sense of Brandi's theory: "The front is clear or illuminated, but no man yet knows what the back of things are made of –we limit ourselves only to seeing– nor does anyone know what the bottom of things are made of, where everything fluctuates" (Bloch, 1989: 184).

#### Like an opening: space (and objects)

From the start of this essay, I have left aside a theme that I see as central within the wide-ranging and complex work of Cesare Brandi: the theme of space. Brandi individuates and uses many types of space: different types of space, in fact, pertain to critical writings and to works of art. *Epochè* or reduction: the meaning of these terms goes beyond suspension, and includes notions of bracketing, enucleation of another space. A space, a "furrow of nothing" separates *flagranza* from *astanza*. Different types of space are necessary for an artwork or for a *lacuna*, this is also true for its restitution. A work of art includes spaces within itself, the space of the figure and of the background, for example. And, as we have seen, metaphor produces a continual movement back and forth between two spaces: the list could go on.

But the space which interests us most now is the special space of the work of art and especially of architecture.

For Brandi, the spatiality of the work of art, insofar as it is pure reality or *astanza*, possesses autonomy: "This spatiality manages then to insert itself in the physical space which is our own space – where we live – and it manages to persevere within that space, without however participating in it"<sup>81</sup> (Brandi 1963b: 78; Brandi, 1977: 50).

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<sup>80</sup> By way of example "In restoration, as in art, the last two centuries have seen important transformations; therefore, although it was useful at first, the idea by which restoration regards only or mainly works of art is no longer valid. A contemporary theory of restoration cannot accept such a limited perspective, which even afflicts many relatively recent contributions, like Brandi's *Theory of Restoration*" (Muñoz Viñas, 2017: 38). Quoted original: "Nel restauro, come in arte, gli ultimi due secoli hanno visto importanti trasformazioni; pertanto, pur provandosi utile in un primo momento, l'idea secondo cui il restauro riguarda solo o principalmente le opere d'arte è ormai sorpassata. Una teoria contemporanea del restauro non può accettare tale limite di prospettiva, che pure affligge molti contributi anche relativamente recenti, come la *Teoria del restauro* di Brandi". On this topic, see Carbonara (2018).

<sup>81</sup> Original quotation: "Questa spazialità arriva allora a inserirsi nello spazio fisico che è il nostro stesso spazio in cui viviamo, e arriva a insistere in questo spazio, senza tuttavia parteciparne".

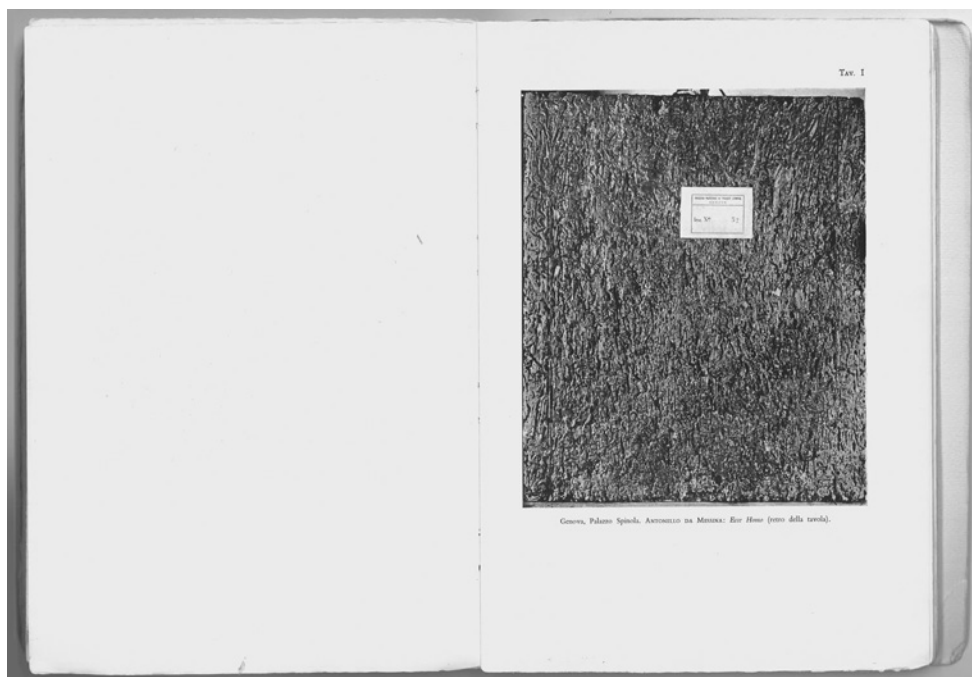


FIGURE 1. FIRST IMAGE IN THE “IMAGE” SECTION OF *TEORIA DEL RESTAURO*, 1963.

Image: Cesare Brandi (1963) *Teoria del Restauro*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura.

In *Teoria generale della critica*, Brandi then separates the treatment of architecture from other manifestations of optical *astanza* and this is because he finds it necessary to make a distinction: space in architecture is not “only the space in which the architectural piece is set and the space that it develops, but above all the opposition between this latter space, which has been called *spatiality*, and phenomenal space which is all around us and in which we are, so to say, immersed”<sup>82</sup> (Brandi, 1998: 258). And in *Struttura e architettura* again:

*Architectural spatiality does not exist either outside architecture nor before architecture. The first notion which can derive from any architectural work is that its astanza is produced within the existential space, but the spatiality which the astanza offers does not coincide with the space it is contained within, nor with any geometrical conceptualization of space, even if spatiality is based on this conceptualization and contains it*<sup>83</sup> (Brandi, 1975: 49).

This spatiality-space opposition that is so important recalls some of Heidegger’s reflections, especially where in *The origin of the work of art* he introduces the theme of the Greek temple and its significant role:

*A building, a Greek temple, reproduces nothing. It rises simply in the midst of a steep valley. (...) Erect, it rests on a base of rock. The temple’s resting brings out the darkness that is in the support, firm but not built. There, the building*

<sup>82</sup> Original quotation: “solo lo spazio in cui si accampa l’opera architettonica e quello che sviluppa, ma soprattutto l’opposizione tra questo ultimo spazio, che si è chiamato *spazialità*, e lo spazio fenomenico che ci circonda e in cui siamo, per così dire, immersi”.

<sup>83</sup> Original quotation: “La spazialità architettonica non esiste né fuori dell’architettura né prima dell’architettura. La prima nozione che si ricava da qualsiasi opera di architettura, è che la sua *astanza* si produce entro lo spazio esistenziale, ma che la spazialità che la *astanza* offre non coincide con lo spazio in cui è contenuta, e neppure con una qualsiasi concettualizzazione geometrica dello spazio, anche se su questa concettualizzazione si basa e la contenga”.

*withstands the storm which strikes it, revealing violence. The splendor and luminosity of the stone, which seems to receive it as a gift from the sun, make the light of day appear, the immensity of the sky, the darkness of the night. Its firm outline makes visible the invisible region of the air. The solidity of the building works as a contrast to the movement of the waves revealing its impetus with its unchanging calm. The tree and the grass, the eagle and the bull, the serpent and the cricket thus come into relief, their figure becomes evident and they reveal themselves for what they are. This coming out and this emerging as themselves and together is what the Greeks originally called Φοις. It illuminates at once that on which and in which man finds his dwelling. We call it Earth. (...). Erect on the rock, the temple opens a world and at the same time leads it back to the Earth, which only then reveals itself as the place of birth. (...). Standing there erect, the temple confers things with their features and gives people the vision of themselves (Heidegger, 1968: 27-28).*

For Heidegger, the temple reveals something else, beyond the built thing and the opening of a world, an excess, on which and in which man finds his dwelling: the Earth, a thing which manifests itself as the unbuilt, which hides-and-protects, something discovered which opens and illuminates at the same time it brings darkness and hiddenness. It is important to underline that the heaviness of rock, like the flexibility of wood, namely the material from which a building is formed, cannot be captured using scales or with calculations: all we *can* capture is their impenetrability, their retreat from any attempt at scientific determination. This, together with the trace of the Earth, is what the artwork conserves, hiding it - and uncovering. *Building dwelling thinking* (Heidegger, 1991b: 96-108), with a few important variations, re-proposes the same theme, with the celebrated example of the bridge. Here building means “building things”, where “things” means safekeeping of the being of the Fourfold, heaven, earth, divine beings and mortals. In this example the bridge continues the function of uncovering which architectures have, and it makes the banks of the river appear and with them the territories behind, it brings closer the river, the banks, the territories; the bridge, as a thing, reunites the Fourfold. However, that which the bridge determines is the place (*Ort*), which did not exist before it; there are spaces (*Stellen*)<sup>84</sup>, therefore, which become places by virtue of the bridge. This is a new reflection with respect to the example of the temple, and it shifts attention away from the birth of the historical world and towards the Earth revealing-and-closing itself, but on the foundation of place through architecture which is remembrance.

In Brandi, the spatiality-space opposition is important for painting and sculpture too, which also create their own space – like Heidegger’s temple and bridge. However, rather than simply insisting on them, he assumes a determining role for architecture: it possesses not only an outside – it also has an inside: “it is not an impenetrable block”<sup>85</sup> (Brandi, 1998: 259).

<sup>84</sup> The idea that there is not only one continuous space, but a set of spaces, is present in Brandi’s writings: “space on stage is not the same as space in the stalls and the curtain codifies this discontinuity. The space of a person on the banks is not the same as that of a swimmer. We have no access to the space of the birds. From these various standpoints, what we can gather is an implicit recognition of contiguous spatial areas: it is *as if* they emanate from an object or a person, even from an action (...). For this reason, the pertinent spatial area is configured not from the outside of the object, but from the inside of the object to the outside: it is an invisible stain which the object develops and which can enter into conflict with other spatial areas” (Brandi, 1998: 239). Original quotation: “lo spazio scenico non è lo stesso della platea e il sipario codifica questa discontinuità. Lo spazio di chi sta sulla riva non è lo stesso di quello del nuotatore. Lo spazio degli uccelli è inaccessibile a noi. Da questi vari traguardi quello che si ricava è un implicito riconoscimento di aree spaziali contigue, che sono *come* emanate da un oggetto o da una persona, infine dallo svolgersi di un’azione (...). Per questa ragione l’area spaziale pertinente viene a configurarsi non dall’esterno all’oggetto, ma dall’interno dell’oggetto all’esterno; è un alone invisibile che l’oggetto sviluppa e che può entrare in conflitto con altre aree spaziali”.

<sup>85</sup> Original quotation: “non è un blocco impenetrabile”.



The difference between a cave and Saint Peter's, Brandi explains, does not so much regard the fact that both have an inside and an outside: it is the fact that the inside and outside of the cave are purely *phenomenal*. His hypothesis is that for architecture, the inside and outside "are inextricably connected while remaining analyzable"<sup>86</sup> (Brandi, 1998: 259). In the phenomenal world, the inextricableness of inside and outside is not an obligation, but for architecture "it follows from the inextricableness of inside and outside that there is no possibility that an inside may not exist: if there were no inside then there would be no phenomenal spatiality-space opposition"<sup>87</sup> (Brandi, 1998: 260). Brandi claims this position is inspired by the process of perception, and he refutes the scientific hypocrisy of an axiomatic method. For architecture "the most noticeable thing is that it transforms natural space and seems to contain that space within it, but not in the same way as a plant or a mountain"<sup>88</sup> (Brandi, 1998: 260). It is already clear that the difference comes from its being made by human hands, although this in itself is not enough, because the same could be said of a balloon.

The spatiality of architecture, rather, "that which is realized in a given figurativeness, does not come to the construction from the outside because it is a function of its own structure"<sup>89</sup> (Brandi 1963b: 105; Brandi, 1977: 77). But architecture does not get its structure only from the inextricable bond of inside and outside: it comes from the necessity that "at every moment the form of architecture is both external and internal to itself and one cannot penetrate the form, but in fact the form is form-which-is-penetrated, and cannot be any other way"<sup>90</sup> (Brandi, 1992b: 263). The internal nature of an outside is not the phenomenal internal nature; "outside and inside, the form must create an internal spatiality untouched by natural space, and therefore *inside and outside are none other than the very dimensions of the spatiality of architecture*, as opposed to the real dimensions of existential space and the mental or supposed dimensions of the space of physics"<sup>91</sup> (Brandi, 1992b: 272-273).

The internal nature of the external and the external nature of the internal define inside and outside as objects, although they remain inextricable within the inside-outside bond. They also assume an operative independence: the reference to the cupola of St Peter's is interesting – the fact that it is made with a double shell, each with an *intrados* and *extrados*– because it is not in fact true (and Brandi would certainly be aware of this) that to build a cupola, a double structure is always necessary: here it seems he is trying to provide an image to illustrate the complex concept of the internal nature of the external and the external nature of the internal. Once again, reference can be made to Heidegger who affirms that "strictly speaking, one can never speak of "touching," (...) because the seat cannot in principle touch the wall, even if the space between them were equal to zero" (Heidegger, 2012: 86). This is theme of the "«internity» of one to the other of forms to hand" (Heidegger, 2012: 87) and the "indissoluble co-presence" of internal and external which Brandi writes of in *Eliante*.

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<sup>86</sup> Original quotation: "si configurino indissolubili pur se analizzabili".

<sup>87</sup> Original quotation: "di una indissolubilità di interno-esterno, non si dà alternativa che possa o non possa esserci un interno: se non vi sia l'interno non si produrrà l'opposizione di spazialità-spazio fenomenico".

<sup>88</sup> Original quotation: "il primo rilievo che si pone è di qualcosa che trasforma lo spazio naturale costituentesi all'osservazione come contenuta in quello spazio, ma non allo stesso modo di una pianta o di una montagna".

<sup>89</sup> Original quotation: "che si realizza in una data figuratività, non viene all'opera dall'esterno ma è funzione della sua stessa struttura".

<sup>90</sup> Original quotation: in ogni suo momento la forma dell'architettura sia al tempo stesso esterna e interna a se stessa e non che si possa penetrare nella forma, ma proprio la forma si ponga come forma-che-si-penetra, né possa darsi in altro modo che così".

<sup>91</sup> Original quotation: "nell'esterno e nell'interno, si deve realizzare, per la forma, una spazialità indenne dallo spazio naturale, e dunque, *interno ed esterno, non sono altro che le proprie dimensioni della spazialità dell'architettura*, di contro alle dimensioni *reali* dello spazio esistenziale, e a quelle *mentali* o *supposte* dello spazio della fisica".

And so, following Brandi's analysis of architecture, what is the real "object" of intervention for restoration? How many "objects" make up the work, separated by their insides and outsides? And again, according to Brandi, how many "spaces" do we need to recognize these objects and work on them?

These issues fit in with reflections by the philosopher Graham Harman who teaches and conducts philosophical research at Southern California Institute of Architecture, Los Angeles<sup>92</sup>. He is one of the principal exponents of the speculative realism movement, in its particular acceptance of *Object Oriented Ontology* (OOO), which he proposes. It is not my intention to go too far into the problems Harman raises, but simply to show that many of them, having roots in the philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger, provide interesting potential lines of flight to the work of Cesare Brandi. And so, I shall leave it Harman to shed a possible new light:

*As is always the case in an ancient discipline like philosophy, not all of the ideas of OOO are new, though they are deployed in new combinations and applied to subjects philosophers have often neglected. Some of the basic principles of OOO, to be visited in detail in the coming chapters, are as follows: (1) All objects must be given equal attention, whether they be human, non-human, natural, cultural, real or fictional. (2) Objects are not identical with their properties, but have a tense relationship with those properties, and this very tension is responsible for all of the change that occurs in the world. (3) Objects come in just two kinds: real objects exist whether or not they currently affect anything else, while sensual objects exist only in relation to some real object. (4) Real objects cannot relate to one another directly, but only indirectly, by means of a sensual object. (5) The properties of objects also come in just two kinds: again, real and sensual. (6) These two kinds of objects and two kinds of qualities lead to four basic permutations, which OOO treats as the root of time and space, as well as two closely related terms known as essence and eidos. (7) Finally, OOO holds that philosophy generally has a closer relationship with aesthetics than with mathematics or natural science (Harman, 2017: 9).*

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. Gannon (2015: 73-94) and Harman (2011).

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