ETHICS IN PRESERVATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract: The text shows the need to analyze the reasons that lead society to preserve their cultural heritage, found in the basis of the theoretical principles that underlie the practice. The idea is to work with coherent criteria and a sound methodology to carry out scrupulous interventions, in contraposition to reductive as well as arbitrary actions, subjected to shortsighted and sectorial interests. These parameters should guide the ethical and deontological principles of the different professions involved, so that the cultural heritage can continue to be accurate documents and, as such, can transmit knowledge in an appropriate manner and serve as effective support for knowledge and the collective memory**.

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The ethical and deontological issues related to the preservation of cultural heritage are, nowadays, a highly emergent theme[1]. In times of accelerated trans-

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** English text: Shirly Gabay. This text revisits statements presented in other texts, especially: Kühl, B., "História e Ética na Conservação e na Restauração de Monumentos Históricos", in *Revista CPC*, n. 1, 2005, pp. 16-40, as well as "Ética e responsabilidade social na preservação do patrimônio cultural", ABRACOR Congress in 2009 and disclosed in the institution's site: http://www.abracor.com.br/novosite/downloads/textobeatrizmk.pdf (21.08.2013). The text was then republished, with the same title, in the magazine *Ideias em destaque*, n. 36, 2011, pp. 86-100.

1 A brief explanation is necessary about the use of certain words in this text. In Brazil, the terms related to preservation are used in a slightly imprecise manner; however, in the fields of knowledge involved the word preservation has a broader sense and includes a great variety of actions such as inventories, registries, laws, heritage education and also the interventions on the historic monuments. With regard to the interventions, the denominations maintenance, conservation and restoration can be used as proposed in the Venice Charter, with increasing degrees of transformation on the monument; or as proposed by Cesare Brandi, who summarizes all of them in the word restoration, the sense adopted in this text. We are aware of postures counteracting restoration, emphasizing conservation as an action with a diverse essence. There are also those who still look at restoration as an act that leads the monument to

formation, the lack of clarity with regard to what motivates preservation, associated to the disqualification of theoretical instruments in the restoration field, constructed over centuries, have resulted in a lack of coherent criteria to act on historic buildings. Everything falls upon the most absolute relativism, leading to unjustifiable destruction and deformation. In order to counteract this situation, the central reflection axis of this text revolves around reasons that lead us to preserve, which are essential to guide the principles of intervention —i.e., the theoretical instruments that should guide practical actions— and circumscribe its objectives, having an impact on the choice of the technical-operational means necessary to achieve them.

These problems have been mostly faced without methodological consistency: the particularities of each case have been translated, in the practice, in permissive attitudes within building, urban or territorial scale. The legitimate broadening of what is considered cultural heritage, motivated by increasingly varied reasons, with conflicting interests among them, instead of conducting a reflection focused on the "common good"[2] —based on ethical principles that contemplate the interest of society considered in a wide-ranging and inclusive manner, and time in the long term—, has served as an excuse, on behalf of an alleged democracy, in the name of a false, short-term and mistaken notion of progress, to leave everything at the mercy of the strongest. Moderating power —that should be based on the very old reflection over preservation and restoration— has no effect, and the result of this are solutions that benefit restricted sectors of society, in the short term, and cause unrecoverable damage.

Another constant type of reductionism is related to the fact that any intervention has relative pertinence, for in restoration there is not only one solution, that is universally accepted and in a timeless manner, but several solutions with relative pertinence. Because of that, many believe that anything done to a historic building can be considered preservation. Solutions pertinent to the restoration field must be guided by the reasons that lead to preservation, understood as an ethical-cultural act, and by intervention principles that arise because of them. It is essential to analyze the theoretical basis of restoration, in its different aspects and transformations over time, in order to obtain a more complete understanding of the formulations, so that they can be interpreted for specific cases: the intention is to avoid arbitrariness, even though any intervention should always be questioned.

its supposed initial state, in a nineteenth century view of the problem, or which "freezes" it. In this text, the word preservation is used in the broader sense, and the word restoration is used to characterize the disciplinary field that guides the interventions on cultural heritage, that on changing them, respect their essence and are based on cultural, ethical and scientific reasons.

2 For a comprehensive view of this problem, see: Settis, S., *Azione popolare. Cittadini per il bene comune*, Turin, Einaudi, 2012.

However, in Brazil (and not only there), many of the theoretical frameworks related to preservation in general, and to restoration in particular, have given place to hurried and mistaken interpretations. In the Brazilian debates there is a polarization towards largely undesirable extremes that seek to disqualify the theoretical frameworks: on the one hand, because the existence of reflection about the theme is not known or the usefulness of the theoretical frameworks is not surmised, with the excuse that they would be disconnected from reality, not being seen as a legitimate dimension of practice itself; on the other hand, because the theoretical formulations existing are depreciated through unfounded pseudo interpretations that are based on false assumptions and cannot be sustained if analyzed in the light of a accurate epistemological criticism.

This can be verified in comments about the Venice Charter or about formulations by Alois Riegl or Cesare Brandi, for example. Phrases are removed from their context: the view of the author is flattened to a fragment of the work, without consideration for the production as a whole, and this results in deformed interpretations. According to this procedure principles contained in the Venice Charter, for example, are considered flawed, or those formulated by Brandi are considered outdated, without any explanations; something completely distinct from a legitimate critique of these texts —that have always existed and should exist— which take diverging and well-founded stands. The problem also extends to the examination of our legislative framework: although the Brazilian legislation is laconic in what refers to principles of intervention, there are methods of interpretation affiliated to gnosiology and hermeneutics (and used in jurisprudence), which allow us to understand a given formulation in a broader manner. These instruments must be used to examine any text to elaborate a well-based reading of it and not a reductive and misleading one.

Texts from the field are not self-explanatory and cannot be confused with a prescription of mechanical rules to be applied in a direct and easy manner in practice. As an example, the Charters concerning cultural heritage in Brazil gave place to questionable interpretations, because of a basic mistake: the charters are treated like a homogenous set of documents coherent with each other, and therefore, can provide the choice of excerpts for one or another to corroborate a specific intervention. The Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments (1931), the Venice Charter (1964), the Norms of Quito, from the Organization of American States (1967), and the European Charter of Architectural Heritage, from the Council of Europe (1975), for example, are placed in the same level, without making the necessary distinction between them. They are all interesting, but are far from constituting a homogenous set, since they were elaborated in different periods, by diverse organisms, with divergent purposes; therefore, they have very dissimilar intentions and repercussion, which must be properly highlighted. Even among documents from a single institution, there are considerable differences that must be emphasized in order not to generate mistakes.

Charters are the result of a debate at a specific moment. Firstly, they are not a theoretical system developed in an extensive way; they are concise documents that summarize the consensual points, offering general indications. Thus, they contain guidelines, or, at most, prescriptions. Charters such as that of Venice, exactly because they are international, cannot have a normative character, for their indications should be reinterpreted in different cultural and legislative[3] realities. However, if duly examined for local realities, they can have an important role in the normative construction of different countries, something that did not happen in Brazil.

In order to interpret not only Charters, but also any text in a judicious manner, it is necessary to elaborate an accurate analysis of its totality, and not extract random phrases so as to deny its own essence. In the case of scientific meetings, thorough reading of the proceedings is necessary to reach in-depth understanding of the context, and the reasons that led to a certain formulation. The scientific production on the theme that preceded the elaboration of the writing must also be meticulously studied in order to understand the several transformations in the field, and its theoretical frameworks. This study must also be accompanied by an analysis of proposals contemporary to the formulation examined and broad knowledge of the author's production, or that of the authors, to examine the different lines of thought about the theme and the circumstances of their elaboration. The analyses allow us to explore the context in which certain theoretical instruments were created and then appropriated and transformed. Finally, it is necessary to elaborate a teleological analysis, understanding the writing in view of its objectives.

This digression is important in the Brazilian case, given the lack of tradition in the discussion about these themes, in spite of the numerous citations made, many times randomly, of texts, which refer to restoration. An interesting case can be seen in the most recent *Arquimemória*, an international meeting about preservation of built heritage, held in Salvador (Bahia), in May 2013[4]. One of the proposals of the organizers was to show the different lines of thought in restoration existing nowadays, also to counteract what they considered a very dogmatic view of the *Theory of Restoration* by Brandi. Sometimes it is considered, in Bahia, as a fixed clause, which does not accept interpretations, and even restoration would not allow other views. The initiative to uncover the diversity of lines of thought —that always existed in restoration— and also the possibilities for interpretation

3 For interpretations of the Venice Charter see: Carbonara, G., "I trent'anni di una buona carta del restauro", in *Restauro*, n. 131-132, 1995, pp. 57-60; Kühl, B., "Notas sobre a Carta de Veneza", in *Anais do Museu Paulista*, v. 18, n. 2, 2010, pp. 287-320; Pane, A., *Drafting of the Venice Charter: historic developments in conservation*, Dublin, Icomos Ireland, 2010.

4 The event program can be found in: http://www.iab-ba.org.br/arquimemoria4/?page_id=19. (08.08.2013).

of theoretical instruments is praiseworthy. However, the perception of some participants in the event is that, sometimes —with commendable exceptions, such as the statements made by Marco Dezzi Bardeschi—, there were attempts to disqualify the Brandian frameworks without any real foundation, and these statements are taken as truth, without any pondering about what is really in the texts, nor what was done by the ICR of Rome during the decades when it was directed by Brandi; i.e., disconsidering theoretical as well as practical frameworks. In the same manner, the success that statements made by Salvador Muñoz Viñas[5] have had in Brazil over the last few years: everything he proposed and his reading of Brandi (with a series of mistakes[6]) are seen as absolute truth, without any unquestioning; in addition, his proposals are interpreted so as to justify total relativism towards cultural heritage.

The lack of tradition in epistemological criticism makes the discussion about these themes become superficial, a result of passing fads, and not a necessary and well-based theoretical debate, resulting in deformed and absolutely staggering interpretation of the texts.

Another common deviation is to consider the use of these references as meaningless, since the line of thought of several authors is not the same. There are no authors that coincide completely (except in the case of plagiarism), in any area of knowledge. There are postures with convergence in certain topics and divergence in others, which help to establish frameworks, offering resources for reflection. They circumscribe fields of pertinence, which are necessarily ample, as thought does not converge to one point only. These frameworks help to define what is pertinent to the field, separating what completely exceeds its themes, methods and objectives.

On examining the transformations of preservation over the centuries, it is possible to verify that the construction of the issues is, largely, associated to the acquisition of a "historical conscience", and to the notion of rupture between the past and the present[7]. With time, the ways of dealing with heritage from other generations —recognized as having a cultural interest— drifted apart from actions dictated uniquely by pragmatic reasons (of use, and economic ones) that predominated

5 Muñoz Viñas, S., *Contemporary Theory of Conservation*, London, Routledge, 2004.

6 For some of them see: Vieira, N.; Nascimento, C., "A cristalização da 'eterna imagem do passado' nas práticas preservacionistas dos sítios históricos brasileiros: perspectiva para a sua superação", in *Enanparq II: Atas eletrônicas*, Natal, Enanparq, text ST523-03.

7 There is a vast bibliography about the theme; to mention only a few texts used in Brazil, that point to a broader bibliography, see: Carbonara, G., *Avvicinamento al restauro,* Naples, Liguori, 1997; Choay, F., *A Alegoria do Patrimônio,* São Paulo, UNESP, 2001; Jokilehto, J., *A History of Architectural Conservation*, Oxford, Butterworth, 1999. The notion of rupture between past and present is associated to the vision of time linearity, with Jewish-Christian roots, which predominates in most western societies. The considerations made here about the materiality of the buildings are pertinent for this type of view; they are not valid for social groups that have a vision of circularity of time.

until then, and gradually took on a cultural connotation, whose emphasis used to vary and still varies over time. Sometimes, it was centered on the importance of historical events, or on exceptional artistic quality; more recently, it became a widened conception, also focused on memorial and symbolic aspects. Thus, practical reasons do not prevail in an isolated manner, although they are always present, and they become concomitant, being used as a way of preserving, but not as the unique purpose of action.

In the broader current view, we preserve cultural heritage for the following reasons: cultural, for its formal, documentary, symbolic and memorial aspects; scientific, as cultural heritage transmits knowledge in different fields of knowledge; and ethical, as we don't have the right to erase the traces of past generations and deprive the present and future generations from the possibility of knowledge that these historic monuments hold.

In this maturing process, a wide variety of theoretical formulations and practical experimenting were made over several centuries. Upon the reflection about results, especially as from the 19th century, restoration constructed its own theoretical-methodological and technical-operational instruments, which transformed it into a discipline that acquired an epistemological status. Thus, principles that could guide interventions are constituted, with the aim of the buildings being transmitted to the future in the best possible way, without denaturing or distorting them, complying with their role of cultural heritage: so that they continue to be accurate documents and as such, serve as effective support for knowledge and collective memory. Therefore, any intervention should be justifiable according to the reasons that lead a society towards preservation.

Analyzing many of the recent interventions on historic buildings in Brazil and the growing de-characterization to which they are submitted[8], the need to discuss theoretical precepts to guide practical actions becomes blatant. It is clear that it is not the only aspect to be considered, however it is a major problem that has not been debated. Presented below are two recent cases to illustrate the issue: The Maracanã Stadium, in Rio de Janeiro and a railway warehouse in Santos, State of São Paulo.

The Maracanã Stadium went through transformations with a view to the World Cup in 2014. Inaugurated in 1950, it has been protected by federal law since 2000. It has an elliptical form, with a reinforced concrete structure, made of pillars articulated to the beams and cantilevered roof. For a long time it was the greatest stadium in the world, a reference for everyone, not only because of the matches played there, but also due to its role in the composition of the

8 For other examples, see: Kühl, B. *Preservação do Patrimônio Arquitetônico da Industrialização,* Cotia, Ateliê, 2009.

urban landscape and the way in which its canopy framed the views of the city. The first significant modifications, demanded by FIFA, were made for the 2000 FIFA Club World Championship: individual seats, banning of spectators standing up, which led to the construction of a temporary platform above the "general spectator area" (ellipsoidal ring around the field, with the floor at a lower level compared to the field, a standing-only sector). The federal preservation organ allowed the transformations, which, although voluminous, were reversible. For the 2007 Pan-American Games, more work was done, such as the suppression of the general spectator area to install seats, the lowering of the field, to allow for better visibility, waterproofing of the roof and modernization of the installations. Nothing compared however, to the work concluded in June 2013. FIFA suggested expanding the covered area, something that could be solved by adding a temporary canopy. The analysis of the concrete roof showed that in spite of its bad state of conservation, it would be possible to recover at elevated costs. The decision however, was to demolish it completely, with the justification that it was not possible to recover it, something that contradicts the technical report. The result was the radical transformation of the whole stadium, at very high costs, which generated an open investigation by the Federal Public Ministry[9]. Another argument put on the agenda for discussion was the type of registration itself[10], as the Stadium was registered in the book of Archeological, Landscape and Ethnographical Monuments, and not on account of its architectonic quality; this is why, some said that what mattered was the "spirit of the place" and that the transformations would not cause damage to the monument. This argument is deceitful, for all monuments, registered in any of the books, are equal before the law, which demands that they should not be destroyed, nor mutilated. Registration as cultural heritage is applicable to "things" and not the "spirit", remembering that there is a specific federal law for immaterial heritage, dated from 2000. In other words, according to the law, materiality must be respected. The integrated structure system of the stadium was unique and its partial demolition leads to the destruction of the organism's composition logic. In spite of the polemic involved in the case, it was not possible to stop the works.

9 The data comes from: Girão, C., "Maracanã, destruir ou preservar", in *Vitruvius*, 2012 http://www.vitruvius.com.br/revistas/read/projetos/12.133/4225 (04.06.2013). The work reached the amount of about 320 million Euros, sufficient for the construction of two new stadiums following FIFA standards.

10 The federative structure of Brazil reflects in the management of its cultural heritage. There is a federal preservation agency, created in 1937, which aims at protecting the relevant monuments for the whole country. Many of the state offices were created later, such as the one in São Paulo (1968), followed by the multiplication of the municipal agencies. The protection in the federal sphere is regulated by several legislative instruments: the first of them is the decree-law 25, from 1937, still in effect. The works considered to be heritage are registered in one (or more than one) "Livros do Tombo", i.e., registration books, specified in the 4th clause: the Archeological, Ethnographic and Landscape; the Historical one, the one of Fine Arts; and the one of Applied Arts.

Another controversial issue started in 2010, with regard to one of the warehouses of the railway complex in the port of Santos. It happened at a moment in which, due to transformations in the railway system —privatizations of road concessions, extinction of companies— there was interest from preservation agencies —federal and state—, for the railways as a system, not going back to listing only the passenger building anymore. The warehouse belonged to the most ancient railway of São Paulo, the São Paulo Railway (SPR), inaugurated in 1867 to connect the port of Santos to the coffee-producing zone in Jundiaí, going through the city of São Paulo. The warehouses in Santos were crucial to the State of São Paulo export-import system; this is why they were expanded at the end of the 19th century. A huge quantity of merchandise went through them, especially coffee, but also other products for exportation as well as everything that is imported, including machinery supplied to the industries. They are therefore extremely important in the configuration of the railway complex, with an important role in the agro-exporting activities and in the industrialization process of the State.

In 2010, the preservation of the whole complex was approved by the State's office. However, conflicts arose later as one of the warehouses was in an area acquired by the oil company Petrobrás that would build an administrative complex. The architectonic project of Ruy Rezende, currently in progress, foresaw the partial demolition of one of the warehouses and maintained the decision in spite of the registration of the warehouse as cultural heritage, for the construction of three tall administrative towers, that do not respect the building scale of the port area[11]. This conflict, instead of generating a more informed debate with an agreement that could offer Petrobrás other areas to construct within the same city zone, or the revision of the project, taking advantage of the warehouse for the administrative activities, led, in 2011, to the revision of the registration —against the report made by the state's office staff— as well as to a partial demolition. The perception of the warehouse's architecture, limited to a third of it, was mutilated, as its proportions were changed from 1:4 —i.e., an elongated rectangle, with dimensions that allowed, also from for its spatial composition, to perceive the importance of the export-import activities of the State— to 1:1,5, a belittled remnant tending towards a square. The action interferes in the configuration of the railway-port complex, inserting elements disregarding its scale, and also in the perception of the Franciscan complex, with origins dating back to the 17th century. According to recent information, the work of Petrobrás was affecting the structures of a church and a cemetery of the 18th century[12].

11 For the analysis of the problem see Soukef, A., *A preservação dos conjuntos ferroviários da São Paulo Railway em Santos e Jundiaí*, São Paulo, FAUUSP, 2010, pp. 242-287.

12 Ratton, C., "História ameaçada: Santuário do Valongo sob risco de extinção", in *Diário do Litoral*, 05/08/2013 http://www.diariodolitoral.com.br/conteudo/15233-historia-ameacada-santuario-do-valongo-sob-risco-de-extincao (09.08.2013).

The factors that weighed on the decision have little to do with preservation understood as an act motivated by ethical-cultural reasons; an alternative solution, which would preserve the complex and guarantee the legitimate needs of Petrobrás, could have been found. The counter-arguments, as in the case of Maracanã, were seen as old-fashioned, fetishist, unrealistic and contrary to progress.

If transformations that preservation went through over the centuries are analyzed as well as the consolidation of restoration as an autonomous disciplinary field —which is different from being an isolated field (for it needs the articulation of several areas of knowledge)— it is possible to verify that in spite of the current diversity of lines of thought[13], there is a common core in the field. Restoration has a methodology, theoretical principles and technical-operational procedures of its own that are the result of experimentations over centuries and the reflection about the reasons that lead societies to preserve cultural heritage. In practice, solutions vary greatly, due to different lines of thought and to technical means used in the operational phase: every building, or complex of buildings, has its own configuration, materiality and peculiar course over time. However, this diversity of possible solutions does not imply that any action can be called preservation: there is a field of pertinence outlined by theoretical and methodological aspects related to preservation understood as an ethical-cultural act.

Hence, efforts made by different authors to establish criteria (and not rules) for action must be examined. Brandi, for example, admonished, several decades ago that "the practical side of restoration is to restoration, as a ruling is to legal norms"[14]. In nowadays practice, "penalties" have been applied in the absence of a "norm"; we move on to "how" we can restore without asking about the "whys", resulting in arbitrary actions. This does not mean that all interventions made in Brazil are bad, but they depend on the judgment of one person who is going to "judge" the monument more or less conscientiously, according to his or her abilities. Thus, the decision does not come from the notion of "justice", which emanates from society that is aware of the role attributed to historical monuments as support for knowledge and memory. A "penalty" should not be applied to a historic building in the absence of a "norm", in order not to fall back on arbitrariness. A judge is expected to establish a sentence based on the law and not on an individual momentary vision; in accordance with existing codes —where the latter are not frozen— they are a social construction that varies over time. The current situation of cultural heritage is similar to that of human beings before the existence of the rule of law.

Another point must be analyzed within this context: all individuals must be equal before the law. Historical monuments, metaphorically likened here to indi-

13 For supplementary bibliography on this topic refer to: Kühl, B., *Preservação...*, *op. cit*., pp. 81-100.

14 Brandi, C., *Theory of Restoration*, Florence, Nardini, 2005, p. 78.

viduals, as already argued by Riegl —who gave significant steps in the consolidation of the field— must not be understood only as grand works, of exceptional value, but as a work that has acquired a cultural connotation over time, something close to the etymological sense of the "monument" as an element of recollection. "Works of art" are compared to the "other" products, with no distinction, in terms of methodology, between "fine arts" and other forms of manifestation of human doings. In the same manner, in jurisprudence there are no discriminations due to appearance, social condition, etc. Riegl's proposals can be considered the "universal declaration of historical monuments rights", as, according to his propositions, any work that existed for some time could be worthy of preservation and, if considered as such, is equal before the law of protection: this does not mean that the buildings are alike, but they have the same legal protection and must be treated according to coherent criteria.

It is worth highlighting the manner in which Riegl has been interpreted in Brazil. His propositions offer innovative ways for the theory and practice of preservation, when contemplating legislative aspects and acutely analyzing the role of historical monuments and their different forms of apprehension by a society through the "values" explained by him in *The Modern Cult of Monuments*[15], from 1903. In Brazil, one fact is frequently ignored: that the *Cult* is articulated to the a draft law, where it is clear that in the interventions on monuments only one of the values must serve as a guide, so as not to apply diverging criteria to buildings, which before the law have the same rights. In Brazil, it is stated that the "values" can be applied in an alternate way, leading to the comfortable situation of using diverse criteria according to the party's own interests.

Riegl's normative construction is based essentially on respect towards the age-value[16], which depends on the appreciation of the signs of the passing of time, regardless of the initial destination of the building. Protection does not focus on the recovery of old "forms", nor does it disconsider different phases of buildings. It is based on the cult of "age-value", as it is considered the most inclusive, and it respects as a whole buildings from of any time, different stratifications of the same piece building, and traces of the passing of time.

Regardless of having more affinity with Riegl's or Brandi's propositions or other more recent formulations and reinterpretations, the need to act according to consistent criteria, derived from the awareness of the reasons that led to preservation, must be shown.

15 Riegl, A., "The Modern Cult of Monuments", in *Oppositions*, n. 25, 1982, pp. 20-51.

16 See, Progetto di un'organizzazione legislativa della conservazione in Austria, by Riegl, published in the compilation organized by: Scarrocchia, S., *Alois Riegl: Teoria e Prassi della Conservazione dei Monumenti*, Bologna, Clueb, 1995, pp. 171-236. See the considerations by Riegl for the preservation law (pp. 209-210), showing the most inclusive character of age-value, based on the "solidarity with the whole world" and the provisions for the application of the law (pp. 222-236).

It is also important to note that technical-operational means are essential, and must be laboriously debated and researched; however they cannot be understood as being disconnected to the discussions mentioned above, as one of the risks we run today is excessive specializations, fragmentation of knowledge and disciplinary dispersion, which leads to blind faith in technicalities.

Preserving should always be a multidisciplinary process, even if the operational phase is carried out by only one person. It is essential to act with methodological rigor proper to the humanities (which must not be confused with methodological obsession). Restoration is an act necessarily anchored in several fields of knowledge, and in the critical and scientific thought of the moment in which it is made. The link with the humanities is essential for those who work in preservation, for it allows us to overcome attitudes dictated by individual preferences, which any thinking being has, and to rise above a greater or smaller appreciation of a social group with regard to cultural manifestations from other periods, and to act according to a sound professional deontology. How many times in history certain types of productions were neglected at first, to be appreciated later, after many testimonials had already disappeared? Every professional has individual preferences, but he or she must overcome them based on appropriate deontology, so as not to fall back on arbitrariness. This process is not obvious and this is also why pluridisciplinarity is necessary: to minimize the risk of partial and deforming attitudes.

Interventions on cultural heritage demand detailed studies; they do not admit simplification, nor mechanical application of formulas: thus the need to work on principles, or criteria (and not fixed rules) to lay the foundation for the proposals. In addition, restoration, the way it is understood today, does not mean going back to the past (this happened in the 19th century), nor freezing or embalming, nor drawing the buildings apart from reality. It means always transforming, as nothing remains the same for an indefinite length of time; therefore, restoration should control the transformation in order to transmit the work to the future, based on the respect for its composition, its materiality and its transformation over time, to reinsert it into the current socioeconomic reality. It is therefore an act of respect for the past, made in the present, which always maintains the future in the horizon of its reflections. In restoration, according to the definitions in its disciplinary field, the building is not returned to a known earlier state; it is in a certain situation and another is addressed. Changes are necessary and desirable, but they are the consequence of multidisciplinary studies.

Many times though, restoration is disqualified, since it is considered insufficient to face current demands —a conclusion reached based on prejudice and not on the updated definition of restoration in its disciplinary field—, in favor of actions called “requalification”, “recovery”, “recycling”, and other “lexical regurgitations”

as understood by Gaetano Miarelli Mariani[17]. These proposals do not take into consideration the epistemological instruments of restoration and also do not develop consistent conceptual apparatus to ensure that intervention will respect the right to culture and memory.

Restoration propositions demand an interpretation effort related to each case, because of the particular characteristics of each work and its individual aging over time. Thus, comes the need for theoretical reflection that examines the method, to solve the problem so that the subjective idea becomes accessible to a more objective and controllable judgment, even in the intrinsic non-exactitude of humanities[18]. Restoration has consistent methods, concepts, and technical-operational instruments, which offer means so that practical intervention is pertinent to the field, considering its motivations and objectives.

As a critical act, restoration is pertinent to the cultural parameters (and socio-economic-political, etc.) of each period. In a same time, the possible well-founded solutions to a problem can vary: there is not only one plausible solution, accepted unanimously by everyone and valid regardless of time, but several solutions of relative pertinence. Pertinence is also relative with reference to the parameters of previous and posterior times, and it is not possible to forecast what criteria will be used in the future[19]. Intervention on cultural heritage depends on the way monuments are perceived and the answers given by them are related to questions and enquiries formulated by a historical present. This shows an even greater need to act in a well-based manner following ethical and scientific principles. The solution therefore must also be discussed and faced with instruments and be linked to the reality of each period. The fact that, in the future, perception may be different, does not exempt a social group of the responsibility for preservation (and identifying monuments for preservation) if this is not done in a well-based manner, it will happen in a random way.

It is important to highlight that the current lines of thought, those that are really consistent, although they have distinct fundaments and operate in different ways, are based on the view of preservation as an ethical-cultural act, even within the plurality of its formulations. Theoretical precepts therefore allow the circumscription of preservation and the actions related to it, separating them from what

17 Miarelli Mariani, G. "Riflessioni su un vecchio tema: il nuovo nella città storica", in *Restauro*, n. 164, 2003, pp.11-48.

18 See, for example, Heidegger, M., *Chemins qui ne mènent nulle part*, Paris, Gallimard, 1986, pp. 99-126. Heidegger shows that lack of exactitude of human sciences is not a defect; it is a characteristic and a demand, for its objectivity —which has different characteristics, if compared to exact sciences (whose connection with objectivity has the attribute of exactitude)— exists, but demands hard work based on rigorous method to reach objectivity.

19 As explained by Brandi, C., "Il fondamento teorico del restauro", in *Bollettino dell'Istituto Centrale del Restauro*, n. 1, 1950, pp. 5-12.

completely exceeds its motivations and objectives. Having relative pertinence is different from being impertinent to the field.

Common criticism regarding the ethical-cultural core of preservation is that the resulting actions would be economically unfeasible and insufficient to reinsert the buildings in the dynamics of current society. The few existing comparative studies show that scrupulous conservation cost less than radical "renovation" and is not economically unfeasible. In a meticulous intervention, since it does not have the objective of getting maximum profit and since the project is detailed, costs are more controlled, but the operation is still profitable and feasible. It is essential not to confuse feasibility with maximum profit, nor the legitimate need for profitability with unbridled greed. It is necessary for professionals working in the field, and architects especially, to be aware of this as sometimes the discourse about "freedom" of creation, of claimed social benefit, of unfeasibility of respectful proposals, of an alleged overcoming of restoration, can in fact be placed at the service of merely speculative capital, of profit at any cost, in detriment of sociocultural aspects that should prevail[20].

It is necessary, however, to make the preservation criteria operational for current circumstances, making conscientious experimentations in a gradual manner, confronting theory and practice continuously to reach mature principles, able to face problems in their real complexity. This is the reason for insisting on the need to go back to the roots that motivated preservation of cultural heritage, that drew apart from actions dictated by pragmatic reasons, to take on an ethical-cultural connotation, and analyze the reasons that led restoration to become increasingly apart from empiricism and to be integrated to the critical reflection and to the sciences. The aim is to respect monuments in their configuration, historic and material aspects, as well as their aging over time, so they can continue to be reliable documents, which transmit knowledge, and that serve as effective elements of recollection and support collective memory.

The responsibility of those who work in the field is to ensure the right to knowledge and memory —and its propelling power of transformation—, which implies in the duty of ensuring that several types of testimonials of human work, current and past, exist, live and be respected. In doing so we have a broader set of instruments, which can be perceived and updated, by an individual conscience or in a collective manner, in an infinite number of ways, in the present or the future, for reality to be seized, providing comprehensive ways to adapt to it, transform it and build the future. A professional ethical action, in favor of the common good, is not optional, nor can it be abandoned according to momentary contingencies: it must be a premise.

20 Data from Transparency International, NGO that deals with corruption, quoted by Joseph Rykwert (*apud* La Cecla, F., *Contro l'Architettura*, Turin, Boringhieri, 2008, p. 25), show that 78% of the corruption money of the world goes through construction.