

# ON THE EXPERIENCE OF TEMPORALITY. EXISTENTIAL ISSUES IN THE CONSERVATION OF ARCHITECTURAL PLACES

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## ABSTRACT

In discussions of the conservation of culturally significant architecture, awareness about issues of temporality and its theoretical import has been approached from varied, partial, perspectives. These perspectives have usually focused on accounts of temporality that focus on the past and the present – and more rarely the future – without considering either the complete spectrum of human temporality or its ontological bases. This article addresses this shortcoming with a phenomenology of conservation grounded on the fundamental attitudes of *cultivation* and *care*. After a phenomenological and existentialist analysis of Cesare Brandi's thought – focusing on his paradigmatic *Theory of Restoration* – his attitude comes forth as a limited instance of the modern conservation attitude that is concerned exclusively with architecture as art. This attitude results in a limited temporal intentionality. Following Ingarden and Ricoeur, the existential approach is here applied to the deduced dimensions of the space and time of Dasein – in Heidegger's terms – outlining the grounding of conservation on an existential interpretation of the more fundamental notions of cultivation and care. This interpretation suggests a solution for the modern impasse with an existential account of both the artistic grounding of architecture and its characterisation as the place that temporally accompanies Dasein. Architecture thus emerges as a manifold being, constituting existentially the space for the authentic human being, whose temporal consciousness compels it to cultivate and care about that space, thus enriching the possible approaches to conservation as a collective endeavour.

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## INTRODUCTION

The distinction between consciousness and object allowed Husserl to suggest a setting for human beings within which they can be conscious of their constant becoming in time. In Husserl's suggested temporality, humans exist by having a past, present, and future.<sup>1</sup> For conservators of architecture, however, the centre of gravity of temporality has often, and preferentially, been situated in the past, sometimes in the

present, but only rarely in the future. Following Husserl, Heidegger, more than any other philosopher, started to question not so much the relation between a human being's consciousness and time, but also the existence of human being *as* temporality and thus, in a broader sense, Being as temporality. We will follow Heidegger in focusing on the concept of Dasein as the place of disclosure of Being. For Heidegger, Dasein, as a being-in-the-world, overcomes the subject-object paradigm, thus emphasising humanity's embeddedness in the environment. Part of the appeal of these frameworks is that Cesare Brandi, with whose work we will engage, primarily positioned his later aesthetic theories – in particular his *Teoria Generale della Critica* – in these philosophical terms.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly we will attempt to illuminate the relation between Dasein's temporality and architecture by interpreting this relation in the context of a critical dialogue between Heidegger's existential philosophy and Brandi's theoretical framework in his *Theory of Restoration*, taken as an example of the modern approach to conservation.<sup>3</sup> Our aim is to articulate a more holistic attitude to architectural conservation, thus achieving a consideration of human inhabitation within an architectural heritage while placing dwellers as the focus of the restoration. We will challenge modern conservation attitudes which privilege a fetishisation of the past manifested in architectural objects.

The place where humanity dwells is formed by nature and architecture. This all-embracing environment constitutes the only possible dwelling place and thus the only possible horizon for human perception and experience. Gadamer writing metaphorically, says, “[...] a hermeneutical situation is determined by the prejudices that we bring with us. They constitute, then, the horizon of a particular present, for

they represent that beyond which it is impossible to see.”<sup>4</sup> Taken to apply to our physical environment, Gadamer’s view means that by the time we reflect in the present about our all-embracing environment, we already have preconceived perceptions and intuitions about it that cannot but determine our understanding of it. The built environment can be read, but how? As a sort of trace or inscription, as Ricoeur has described the city, the architectural place discloses readable structures as part of these unavoidable predispositions.<sup>5</sup> These structures, however, are neither static nor fixed. They evolve along with the historicity of Dasein, but so too does the built environment. The environment reacts to each step we take or action we perform. The city is the paradigmatic place where this happens. Processes of memory and assimilation incessantly take place there and with them humans evolve in time, constantly unveiling and concealing their existential condition. Heidegger’s concept of disclosedness involves then an uninterrupted decoding of Dasein’s place in the world, an understanding that is always merged with that of Dasein’s constant temporalizing.<sup>6</sup> Heidegger had first suggested in *Being and Time* that temporality is ontologically primary; however, in his later writings he was more concerned about the issue of dwelling, as the fundamental way of Dasein’s being-in-the-world. Because of this shift in favour of place instead of time, scholars have suggested the primacy of place for Heidegger’s concept of Dasein, considering the German origin of the word that is already stating a *there* (Da) before a *when*.<sup>7</sup>

As we approach an interpretation of the conservation endeavour’s intentionality, this philosophical background allows us to begin addressing the architectural place in existential terms. This interpretation of existence rests on some

of Ingarden's modes of being as well as on some phenomenological, temporal standpoints concerning the architectural place, understood now as Dasein's sheltering environment. A hermeneutical journey through the architectural place and a phenomenological approach to the assimilation of its transformation are taken as indications of an existential and more fundamental condition for conservation than mere fetishisation of architecture. We will take Brandi's *Theory of Restoration*, which focused on the conservation of the work of art, architecture included, only *as* a work of art, as typical of the modern approach to conservation that is here to be criticized. We turn now to an engagement with the significant issue of architecture as inhabited art and Brandi's concept of *astanza* (pure presence).

## **FROM PERCEPTION TO TEMPORAL EPISTEMOLOGY**

In ancient times, or in some primitive cultures, understanding about and orientation to the world was considered an inherent human ability. Advances in technology brought precision, but at the cost of an abandonment of this intimate awareness of being-in-the-world. Absent scientific weather forecasting, farmers knew about changes in the weather by observing environmental evidence; without GPS technology to guide them, sailors used to observe the sun and other stars to orient themselves. Our world has become mediated -- represented -- and our direct experience of it has been weakened. Something about our awareness or our relation with our environment was lost with the advent of modernity.

Conservation, as conceived in Brandi's *Theory of Restoration*, is consistent with this modern shift, considering the architectural place where mankind dwells, not as *somewhere* in which humanity is embedded, but as a separated *something*. Modern

conservation, within the modern paradigm that separates subject and object, is but a way of humanity approaching the world while concealing its existential role *there*, thus hindering the revelation of the world as the place where human being *is*. Current controversies about conservation, development and regeneration projects evidence attitudes where objectification of buildings and disdain towards local dwellers hinder the achievement of agreeable solutions for the main stakeholders.<sup>8</sup> In many of these controversies, the body-space relationship in the constitution of architecture is both merged with and overwhelmed by collective memory. Nevertheless, for the modern attitude in conservation, architecture emerges mainly as a static condition: a condition that seems limited to convey mainly the sensual parts of the architectural manifold. In Ingarden's ontology, objects can be either temporal or extra-temporal objects. He proposes three kinds of temporal beings that we may consider as candidates for how we perceive architecture according to the determination of time: architecture as event, architecture as process and architecture as an object enduring in time.<sup>9</sup> Modern conservation perceptions constitutes architecture as an event in time, thus downplaying, or even ignoring, the other two.

### **Individual Sensual Experiences**

Setting a matrix of the elements constituting the existential determination of Dasein, one could have on one side the individual and the collective dimensions of being and on the other space and time. Seen in this way, the *body* and the immediate environment around it constitute a primordial personal space. Expanding outward, collective space is constituted by the *architectural place*, in the form of buildings and cities, as the place of Dasein in its collective manifestation. This is where architecture,

and the problem of its conservation as temporal intentionality, is located. Time too can be considered both individually and collectively. Any possible personal time is constituted by an existential cone of *life-time* that locates the horizons of experience at one's birth at one extreme and one's death at the other. Collectively, the *historical* and *mythical* dimensions of Dasein's temporal narrative occupy the last position in the matrix. Intending architecture from each one of these positions involves the emergence of different manifestations of culturally significant architecture (CSA). (see figure 1)

Bodily perception of architecture as event, means dealing with an unchanging state, an *icon* presented as a constant now. This is one of the main ways in which architecture has been perceived in the current dominance of the modern gaze. The apprehension of architecture, however, is not merely of a constant now in its materiality, but also in its temporality. In this sense, an instant is individualised, selected and privileged among many other possible instants. The temporal gaze is localised in time as eternal, or as a-temporal, and it looks at all time from that arbitrary moment, being usually an equally de-localised present. This apprehension of architecture departs from the present and is always looking towards the past. When the time for conservation comes, what is being preserved is not an environment but an object, often a *seen* object. An image as event corresponds to the optical givenness that Brandi considers for architecture as a work of art, which constitutes the realising of conservation at the expense of other elements of the architectural manifold.

Architecture perceived as event can also be correlated with Dasein's ordinary life because it works as the background for that life.<sup>10</sup> Dasein in the state of fallenness

– to use Heidegger’s term – would not be able to discern the hidden architectural truth via the apprehension of our being merged with the place, which remains concealed.

This relation is latent only at a sensual level due to the dominance of the visual.

Awareness about the architectural place begins in childhood and develops from the body. The seminal assimilation of the architectural place through the senses originates its image in consciousness in the form of memories and recollections. Thus, when the moment of objectivising architecture comes, its image as event in time appears as one of the essential ways to concretize it.

### **Pervasiveness of the Image**

This prevalence of the visual is evidenced in the pervasiveness of the image in Western culture and conservation is no exception to this. For Brandi’s aesthetics, as well as his theory of restoration, the image is privileged as the locus of the manifestation of pure presence that he names *astanza*. Arguably, the image that conservation privileges is not always artistic. Despite the privileged character of the visual image, other bodily perceptions can be, phenomenologically, the first possible experiences of human spatiality. For human beings the earliest perceived space is the womb: one’s own body, the space that one occupies and the fluid that surrounds one, although without differentiation into self and environment. At this primordial level, we are as one with the environment. Later, after birth, the air that we breathe is part of us while inside us, detaching from us when exhaled; for this, and similar reasons, the limit of our body is not sharply perceived. Awareness of the body being embedded in the medium is concealed from the modern gaze and consequently the architectural

place does not manifest itself as an environment but as alien material buildings and mathematically definable spaces.

The architectural image is not reducible to the visual, contra Brandi, but to any event of sensual perception. The experience of architecture as image emerges from the performance of the corporeal body as well as from the dimension of meaning when perceiving images as representations. The images of an architectural place across the time of one's life form a reserve within which more complex constitutions of architecture are discerned, such as mythical and historical ones. The image of the architectural place – understood as its sensual apprehension – cannot be simply avoided; instead, it demands to be properly considered in the problem of architectural conservation, as part of the architectural manifold and not as the architectural totality.

### **Temporal Processes of Meaning Production**

The notion of historical temporality, embraced by conservation in its modern form, developed following the Enlightenment. Brandi was very aware of the flaws of what he called the *historical search for meaning*.<sup>11</sup> For him art emerges from the presence of the work – *astanza* – and not from its historical factuality, which he terms *flagranza*. In the latter sense, the apprehension of architecture as a process – such as in the result of myths and histories – is linked with the search for meaning, i.e., significance and explanation.

The post-Enlightenment invention of *historical time*, as a new way of understanding temporality, prompted the attitude of learning from the past by trying to discover the laws of historical development. The problem here emphasised is about the relationship between the modern conservator and the audience for culturally

significant architecture. If the audience is compelled to deal with architecture as history – or as myth – the audience’s relationship to that history or myth needs to be authentic. In such a case representations in the form of frozen past time would not seem appropriate. Matter cannot guarantee memory; consequently the architectural place should always be kept alive, or it risks becoming sterile archaeology. Brandi’s theory of restoration, although theoretically informed about the nature of art in temporal terms, still seems aimed at privileging some sort of authentic evidence of the past, without any concession to the existential dimension of the relation between architecture and society. In his *Memory History Forgetting*, Ricoeur suggests moving from an epistemological interpretation of memory and history towards a path of critical and hermeneutical ontology.<sup>12</sup> For us, this suggested move requires an excursus to face the problem that was the main concern for Brandi, namely the one of the nature of art in architecture, and our criticism of his forgetting of being.

## **THE UNCONCEALED OBJECT OF ESTRANGED CONSERVATION**

A work of art in general seems to have an ontological origin in its materials and in a certain attunement in consciousness. Thus, in Heidegger’s terms, art appeals to Dasein’s being through art’s being. Art’s being is found, however, not in matter, but in consciousness. As Ingarden suggests, art is supported on the matter of the work – through which it is revealed – but the artistic quality is immaterial; it is pure presence, what Brandi calls *astanza*.<sup>13</sup> Brandi, as a phenomenologically informed art theorist, understood the philosophical problems at issue for art in the dialectics of actuality and presence;. If this underpinning is mostly implicit in his *Theory of Restoration*, his later thought in *Teoria Generale della Critica* explicitly articulated issues concerning art

arising from phenomenology, structuralism and existentialism, although his theory of restoration could have been improved with more extensive existential insights . For architecture in particular the inclusion of humanity's existential dimension would have been a significant addition, given architecture's fundamental characteristic as a dwelling place.

We therefore label Brandi's attitude toward conservation *estranged*, given that he considers architecture exclusively as pure presence or *astanza* in the act of conservation, rather than as a site of human dwelling. We describe it as estranged because, despite arriving at a seemingly appropriate phenomenological deduction of the work of art, he does not consider the existential dimension of the architectural place that we find as one of its most salient features. Architecture has both a dimension as meaning and a dimension as presence. Estranged conservation coincides with Brandi's notion of restoration which takes the work of art as an intemporal and meaningless entity. Similarly to how phenomenology seems to accept the intemporal quality of the work of art, some contemporary scholars emphasize the preconceptual aspect of aesthetic experience; Brandi is a the precursor to this approach.<sup>14</sup> In this sense, it is our contention that meaning (including language, signification, predicative thought, actuality and so forth) and presence – *astanza* in Brandi's terms – are but different aspects of the manifold condition of the architectural place in which presence manifests its intemporal aesthetic dimension.

### **Meaningless Architectural Presence**

For Heidegger, art in the modern West seems detached from its authentic origin and is thus treated as meaningless. Heidegger and Brandi articulate art's

meaninglessness in different ways. Brandi, in his *Teoria Generale della Critica*, finds the original sense of meaning in reference, namely as a correlative to the linguistic sign.<sup>15</sup> He detaches language, however, from any ontological relationship with the notion of truth, because his understanding of sign comes from the Kantian theory of the schema. This detachment of art from meaning is not articulated – as Heidegger had done – as the interplay between the concealment and unconcealment of being. It is rather, presented as a false problem; “the horizon to which one cannot ever be close enough, because we ourselves are the horizon. The reality, as the possession of the real, is a progressive approach that leaves us always as far away as before.”<sup>16</sup> Brandi describes the notion of art as detached from meaning as a manifestation of pure presence or *astanza*. By contrast, Heidegger links aesthetics back to its sensual origins:

we do not need first to call or arrange for this situation in which we let things encounter us without mediation. The situation always prevails. In what the senses of sight, hearing, and touch convey, in the sensations of color, sound, roughness, hardness, things move us bodily, in the literal meaning of the world. The thing is the *aisthēton*, that which is perceptible by sensations in the senses belonging to sensibility. Hence the concept later becomes a commonplace according to which a thing is nothing but the unity of a manifold of what is given in the senses. Whether this unity is conceived as sum or as totality or as *Gestalt* alters nothing in the standard character of this thing-concept.<sup>17</sup>

Heidegger suggests that after the mistake of identifying the thing with the idea, truth also came to be understood as correspondence between, in Brandi’s terms, sign and referent.

In Heidegger's renowned discussion of the peasant shoes in a Van Gogh painting, he argued that the disclosure of what equipment is in truth was realised through the work of art. According to him "[t]he painting spoke. In the nearness of the work we were suddenly somewhere else than we usually tend to be."<sup>18</sup> Thus, the work of art brings forth the presence of something that was not there before, that is what something is in truth. Heidegger calls this an unconcealedness of Being, what the Greeks called *alētheia* (commonly translated as truth). Heidegger suggests that truth happens in the work of art through the disclosing of a particular being. "The essence of art would then be this: the truth of being setting itself to work [...]"<sup>19</sup> For Heidegger architecture would constitute art in the happening of the truth of its inhabitation, in its allowance of dwelling, while for Brandi *astanza* in architecture is manifested in the mutual and revealing opposition between exterior and interior,. While Brandi does not ignore inhabitation, it is only important as a way to visualise architecture in its actuality while detaching it from the phenomena of signification: "[...] a house is not built in order to communicate that it is a house, but to inhabit it" he says.<sup>20</sup>

Heidegger suggests that in the work of art there is a strife between disclosing and concealing in which by "[s]etting up a world and setting forth the earth [...]" the unconcealedness of being as a whole, or truth, is won."<sup>21</sup> This bringing forth of (a) being is done in a way never done before and never to be repeated that finds its correlation in the epiphany of the work of art to which Brandi regularly appeals. In the case of architecture this effect is multiplied by the plurality of Dasein's inhabitation. By contrast, Heidegger argued that for the Greeks, craft and art were not distinguished, both being called *technē*, a mode of knowing, not making.<sup>22</sup> Through

*technē* it was possible to reach *alētheia*. In contrast with today's Western notion of art, art for the Greeks was part of the common knowledge of the essence of everyday beings.

Brandi argues that the implicit evidence of inhabitation is that it results from a need. He does not, however, relate spatial behaviours – as a *portrait* of architectural inhabitation – with mimesis because he is convinced that architecture portrays nothing; architecture, for Brandi, is not a mimetic art. Even if architecture is not mimetic, we argue that *Technē* – in the original Greek sense – would allow ways of inhabitation to emerge through legitimate architectural creation and conservation. Brandi, because of his commitment to a quasi-Kantian schematism, would reject this move. For him “before the primitive hut, there was no concept or image; there was only... a vague intention of that need for shelter from the inclement weather, the dangers of beasts and other men, and who knows what else.”<sup>23</sup>

In the interplay of *alētheia*'s disclosure and concealedness, Heidegger suggests that “art is the preserving of truth in the work. Art then is the becoming and happening of truth.”<sup>24</sup> Conservation, on this view, would be subsumed in the notion of art and not considered something independent. For Brandi restoration was focused on the artistic quality of architecture and thus to be distinguished from other possible ways of taking care of architecture. For Heidegger Brandi's view mistakenly takes art as a quality and not as a happening. Brandi correctly deduced a specific activity to deal with the artistic manifold, however he failed to integrate the existential dimension in his account of architecture. For Heidegger by contrast, preservation would be to inhabit – to dwell – in the way that architecture asks Dasein to participate in the revealing of

truth. We explore this particular dimension of inhabitation in the next section. What is noteworthy up to here is that conservation of architecture is conceived as part of humanity's primordial sense of temporality and not an independent intention to take care of architecture nor a recognition of architecture as an alien artistic quality as in Brandi's notion of restoration.

### **Aesthetics, Truth and Language**

Heidegger suggests that aesthetics as a reflection on art was not required in classical Greece because art was instead the way of knowledge itself; it was the way in which Dasein related to its world "integrated into a unified and meaningful totality."<sup>25</sup> It was only later, in Plato, that beauty came to be understood as the manifestation of truth, in the *eidos* of things. This Platonic conception of truth reduces art to the role of imitation of the idea, displacing it from the privileged place of *alētheia* that Heidegger finds essential. With Heidegger's notion of art as *alētheia* or unconcealment, art itself would be the origin of the work of art and the artist.<sup>26</sup> If art is unconcealment, then it isn't mimetic, making clear how architecture can be art. The detachment between architecture and mimesis was a difficult one for Brandi to account for. On the one hand, he says that art forms like painting (or sculpture), "given its *figurative* nature, exists in spatial autonomy that is the prerequisite of pure reality." On the other hand, it seemed obvious to him that architecture did not imitate anything.<sup>27</sup> What could an architectural mimesis imitate? Instead, the key to his approach to architecture as art can be found in his use of the Kantian schematism, which determines an epistemological position and not an existential one.

It has been suggested that Kant's demand for universal assent in matters of taste requires an appeal to a human community of sense (*sensus communis*) as a possible destiny "perhaps never to be realized."<sup>28</sup> On this interpretation "through [Heidegger's] detailed discussion of the problem of presentation and representation, of what he calls schematism and symbolism, Kant has problematized, and to certain extent neutralized, the question of imitation."<sup>29</sup> It is on this epistemological loop that Brandi is trapped in his demarcation of architecture as art. Brandi discussed this from his early *Eliante* until the later *Teoria Generale della Critica*.<sup>30</sup> Since Brandi's approach to art, especially architecture, was mainly epistemological, his theory of restoration is easily interpreted as a suggestion for *praxis*. On an existential front, Heidegger attempted then to overcome the metaphysical concept of aesthetics that highlighted the aspects of production and imitation and to bring art back to the concept of *alētheia*. Thus for different reasons, both Brandi and Heidegger removed mimesis from the notion of art.

For Heidegger, language, and especially poetic language, plays a primordial role in bringing forth the essence of beings, clearing the concealment of Being itself.<sup>31</sup> We do not wish to dwell on the linguistic essence of the bringing forth of truth, but in the non-linguistic manifestation of the unconcealedness of the Being of beings.

Heidegger writes

Art, as the setting-into-work of truth, is poetry. Not only the creation of the work is poetic, but equally poetic, though in its own way, is the preserving of the work; for a work is in actual effect as a work only when we remove ourselves from our commonplace routine and move into what is disclosed by the work, so as to bring our own essential nature itself to take a stand in the truth of beings. The essence of art is poetry. The essence of poetry, in turn, is the

founding of truth. We understand founding here in a triple sense: founding as bestowing, founding as grounding, and founding as beginning. Founding, however, is actual only in preserving. Thus to each mode of founding there corresponds a mode of preserving...”<sup>32</sup>

It is in this preserving that the conservationist attitude finds its origin; it could misleadingly look again to a preservation of truth as in the scientific model. But let us not be confused; it is not an epistemological approach to truth anymore, but – in Heidegger’s terms – it is keeping truth in the clear. Brandi did not consider language in the primordial poetic sense that Heidegger did, but instead as both product and tool of the “epistemological process.”<sup>33</sup> This illustrates a fundamental difference between Brandi’s and Heidegger’s notions of truth. Brandi would never have grounded the conservation of the architectural work of art on an existential matrix as Heidegger did. His way was inspired by the epistemological and neutral Kantian schematism and not by an ontological analysis. Brandi’s conservation was a way of recognising the artistic process as process developed in time. In terms of temporality, however, Heidegger suggested that truth becomes historical through art constituting the origin of creators and preservers.<sup>34</sup> Modern conservation has been taken since its beginning mainly as an objectivising activity and not often as an existential dwelling performance founded on care. Brandi’s theory of restoration is no exception, although it is an outstanding example of philosophical reflection. Theoretical reflective knowledge is not to be marginalised; however, the preference that Heidegger suggested would demand a change of attitudes not only concerning architecture as a work of art – as the privileged place of manifestation of the truth of being – but arguably as the first, last and only place where Dasein dwells.

## **Intemporal Architectural Presence**

The key concepts elaborated by Brandi, in particular his emphasis on art's intemporal condition, can best be made sense of in the context of a philosophical investigation of presence. For instance, scholars have called attention to certain conditions of extreme temporality, which are paramount in aesthetic experiences.<sup>35</sup> The suddenness and the ephemeral character of these conditions relate directly to Brandi's aesthetic theory in which art is characterised as intemporal. Gadamer, for example, suggests that "[a]n entity that exists only by always being something different is temporal in a more radical sense than everything that belongs to history. It has its being only in becoming and return".<sup>36</sup> Given the varied ways in which artistic qualities can be perceived, this argument seems controversial. Brandi bases his theory of restoration on a double instantiation of the work of art – the historical and the aesthetic – that allows consideration of its possible temporal insertion in history.<sup>37</sup> The historical is implied in the existence of the architectural object in time and eventually in its constant use; the aesthetic is given in the recognition of the work of art as such, appearing only in exceptional moments. The first instance, however, seems to be the one in which temporality is common-sensically manifested.

The relation between Brandi and the Modern Movement in architectural conservation was difficult, especially in historically important places, not so much in terms of temporality – or historicity – but in terms of spatiality. By contrast, Gadamer has suggested an aesthetic negotiation between new, modern buildings and their historical context. Against historicism, he writes that "[e]ven if historically-minded ages try to reconstruct the architecture of an earlier age, they cannot turn back the

wheel of history, but must mediate in a new and better way between the past and the present. Even the restorer or the preserver of ancient monuments remains an artist of his time.”<sup>38</sup>

Here the difference between Gadamer and Brandi is decisive. Whilst for the former even the *conservator*, and certainly the restorer, is still an artist of his or her time, for the latter the *restorer* of works of art is not an artist but a critic. Restoration for Brandi is but a methodological recognition of the work of art as a fact already given, not as something to work with.<sup>39</sup> Gadamer instead believes that preservation implies artistic activity because for him architecture has the mission to mediate spatially between drawing attention to itself and redirecting it to the world that architecture *accompanies*.<sup>40</sup> Architecture, for Gadamer, is not important as an attractive artistic object, but as the sanctuary of mankind’s existence. Thus, the approach to the architectural work of art is different from that to other forms of art. For Gadamer architecture is correlated with Heidegger’s notion of dwelling, whilst for Brandi it represents an exceptional artistic epiphany.

Architecture may have an undeniable dimension as artistic object; however, Brandi’s view of the art of architecture seems detached from fundamental existential considerations. Heidegger’s existential approach deduced the condition of art as a happening in the work, as an act of revelation: *alētheia*. Heidegger and Brandi agree on the intemporal conditions of architecture as a work of art; however, the attitudes of conservation deduced from their positions are opposed. While Brandi’s notion of restoration isolates the artistic qualities of architecture, thus ignoring architecture as a place to dwell, Heidegger’s concept of preservation seems comprehensive of both the

disclosure of the truth of being and the care for Dasein's place to dwell. This existential approach to conservation nowadays should be a significant contribution that can help to overcome the impasse whose crisis is starting to be evident in a shift towards more participatory paths. Overcoming this crisis would recover dwelling as the mission of the architectural place.

## **CONSERVATION OF PLACE ACCOMPANYING DASEIN**

We suggest the emergence of *cultivation and care* as the base of a common collective understanding in order to conserve not only culturally significant architecture but also architectural places in general. Architecture may constitute not only an artistic object or one that is simply present or merely useful; architecture participates in an inseparable way in Dasein's existence. A problem arises with the sudden transformation of the world that supported the emergence of certain styles or works of architecture. Sometimes Dasein is compelled to exist in a world that is not *there* anymore.<sup>41</sup>

We have seen that architecture is not only given to us in sensual presentation, but also as constituent of an environment in which we corporeally *are*. This corporeal aspect of architecture points to Dasein's dwelling as a key component of architecture. The *in* of being-in-the-world starts with the body. For Dasein, the body is the first and the only personal occupied space. After that first being *there* that the body characterises, Heidegger would suggest that the spatiality of Dasein "[...] is the point at which we need to return to the *aroundness* (*das Umhafte*) of the environment (*Umwelt*) of Dasein as being-*in*-the-world."<sup>42</sup> Heidegger's notions of concern and care relate to this region that we call *cultivated and cared for*. We now seek to elaborate an

account of care pertinent to our times. In doing so, we must account for how conservation may shift from a *fallen* emphasis on objects of the past towards a futural sense of the existence of being-among-others.

### **In-the-World**

According to this interpretation of Heidegger, considering the aroundness (*das Umhafte*) of its environment (*Umwelt*) and the in-ness of its being-*in-the-world*, both understood as dwelling, is necessary to understand the spatiality of Dasein. It has been suggested that the in-ness can be understood in two senses, one of inclusion and one of dwelling, one of being and one of understanding.<sup>43</sup> Brandi recognises the possibility of conservation beyond the purity of the work of art in the context of the historical instance of restoration. Heidegger, by contrast, privileges dwelling, taking care as a pre-theoretical attitude, a form of concern that never abandons Dasein.

The world is given to humanity not as a Cartesian system of spatial coordinates but as environments made out of the things objectively present that help Dasein to orient itself in the world by configuring a particular spatiality. Heidegger has suggested that the way in which Dasein sees the world is obtained from within the world, making spatiality pre-objective, existential-ontological and not physical-mathematical.<sup>44</sup> Brandi's view of conservation is directed to attaining a critical recognition and thus a cognitive apprehension of the work of art. For Brandi, architecture, as work of art, presents the challenge of being intertwined with an existential dimension that he sets aside, at least for the aims of conservation. He did not see architecture as the whole that constituted a human environment to be conserved *integrally* with its artistic nature. Rather, he took architecture's two aspects,

the artistic and the historical, and treated them as in need of separate forms of conservation. What we are suggesting is that the inclusion of an existential, in this case Heideggerean, perspective could add an additional value for the particularities that architecture presents as the place of human dwelling.

Architecture as a work of art cannot be only considered as something present-at-hand (as a mere thing) or ready-to-hand (as equipment); however, it can be taken as both when its artistic nature is concealed. For instance in terms of architecture's utility for inhabitation it is revealed as something ready-to-hand. Nevertheless, as soon as we perceive architecture, we perceive the others of the world.<sup>45</sup> As a non-figurative art form, architecture brings inhabitation as its revealing happening to presence.

Inhabitation, however, is about Dasein and not about other objects. For architecture, Brandi asks for the restoration of its double spatiality; Heidegger instead claims its capacity to allow dwelling. This Heideggerean claim establishes a difference between architecture as equipment and as a work of art. Brandi seems trapped in-between the factual historical instance and the artistic pure presence. In the voice of Delano – the American organicist architect character of his *Eliante* – Brandi says that

The house is primarily *shelter*, a place to live and to rest, and therefore it is an internal space, a room of air and light, but also of welcoming shade and siesta. One must shape it on the base of a person's life, and not only on certain functions, isolated and geometrically met.<sup>46</sup>

These characteristics, however, are absent from the artistic conservation his notion of restoration implies, leaving Brandi's understanding of conservation of architecture as art as estranged from Dasein's being-*in-the-world*.

In his famous essay “Building Dwelling Thinking,” Heidegger emphasised the roots of *cultivation and care* for the terms building and dwelling. He discloses relations of the words with notions of cherishing, protecting, preserving, and caring as well as with modes of building such as cultivating or edifying.<sup>47</sup> One can suggest, with Heidegger, the conservation of architecture as the privileged place for Dasein to dwell and consider the clearing of the space for it to be free and safe. We suggest that this ideal is constituted by the architectural place, which includes culturally significant architecture as a substantial part, but in no case the only part, and not always the most important part for the inhabitation of humanity. Whether it is still needed to dwell, in Heidegger terms, or another existential interpretation is an open question.

### **Being Temporalizing Beings**

We have suggested *cultivation and care* as a field for Dasein’s life that merges familiar perceptions, public opinion and individual participation. This field was filled in pre-modern times by the traditional world and its slow evolution. Modernity and post-modernity broke that balance leaving the field to be filled with what Heidegger called the *fallenness* of the world. Fallenness is characterised as one of the constituents of care in Heidegger’s thought, the one that puts its emphasis in the present. Cultivation and care, as they used to happen in pre-modern times, to create and preserve the architectural place were interrupted; they are now a dominant concern.

At this point we must clarify our use of the terms *cultivation and care*. Although they are motivated from an existential approach, we associate *cultivation* with Gadamer’s concept of *Bildung* [culture, development, formation], which he

relates with *Kultur*. *Bildung* as formation “describes more the result of the process of becoming than the process itself. [...] [It] grows out of an inner process of formation and cultivation, and therefore constantly remains in a state of continual *Bildung*.”<sup>48</sup>

Further: “what constitutes the essence of *Bildung* is clearly not alienation as such, but the return to oneself – which presupposes alienation, to be sure.”<sup>49</sup> For Gadamer, “the general characteristic of *Bildung* [is] keeping oneself open to what is other – to other, more universal points of view... To distance oneself from oneself and from one’s private purposes means to look at these in the way that others see them.”<sup>50</sup>

*Cultivation*, as related to *Bildung*, means looking after the environment from the most comprehensive horizon for the benefit of the others that exist with oneself. Cultivation implies a letting ourselves grow in the opening towards the others.

The notion of *care*, however, relates partially to Heidegger’s sense of care in its fundamental connection with temporality. Heidegger first conceived care [*Sorge*] as “the care-taker of being, such a care-taking involving an irreducible operation of creation.”<sup>51</sup> He understands the primordial truth of existence as anticipatory, resolute disclosedness [*vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*]. Care supposedly reveals existence on the basis of itself, which for Heidegger means that Dasein’s existence is always and essentially being towards its own death, i.e., Dasein’s existence has death as its most extreme horizon.<sup>52</sup> According to Heidegger, in resolute disclosedness Dasein does not avoid its finite existence but anticipates it, changing its attitude in relation to its surrounding world. This phenomenon points to his notion of care.<sup>53</sup>

Dictated by death as the ultimate horizon of existence, temporality is revealed in these three dimensions of care: the facticity of being-already-in-a-world (past); the

existentiality of being-ahead-of-itself (future); and the falling of being-alongside (present). “Temporality reveals itself to be the sense of authentic care.”<sup>54</sup> Heidegger’s revelation of the original sense of the being of Dasein redefines it as futural, as always to come, always becoming.<sup>55</sup> From this perspective the notion of conservation requires redirection in its temporal emphasis. To conceive his theory of restoration Brandi began from the (claimed to be) impossible human intervention in the time of the creation of art. He disregarded the internal temporality that the work of art has, as evidenced by its previous inhabitation, which we suggest could constitute an architectural form of mimesis. The reason for these exclusions was Brandi’s different understanding of temporality in which presence (as *parousia*) is equal with being present, being there. Brandi could grasp that art was “*parousia* without *ousia*,” thus, presence without existence; however, for him the centre of temporality was still located in the present.<sup>56</sup>

Because of its humanised condition the architectural place – in the form of individual buildings, building complexes, or even cities – participates in the characteristics of a work of art, but also in features that transform it into an almost *animated* character. The authentic being a place to dwell of architecture connects it intimately with humanity’s existence. Architecture seems to mirror the human being’s temporalizing of itself in its different dimensions of care. Indeed, architecture emulates a being that temporalizes other beings. Architecture shelters *cultivation* and provides *care* to Dasein, not only in Heidegger’s sense, but also in other possible senses, in a way that other forms of art cannot; architecture performs as mother’s womb, as lovers’ bed, as final tomb. It accompanies Dasein’s complete existence,

offering, when authentic dwelling is given, a cleared opening in which freedom to live and security to die seem, at least philosophically, possible. The ethical responsibility for this mission does not fall only on architects and conservators. The changes that human inhabitation demands through history invite Dasein to learn how to dwell. Dasein, however, needs to develop fertile existential attitudes that help it to overcome the modern impasse of conservation. Dasein's uncanny fate seems to be – in the collective and the individual – the search for authentic city, the perennial search for home.

## **ARCHITECTURAL HABITUATION TO CONSTANT BECOMING**

This article aims to move the philosophical discussion on conservation forward towards a broader understanding in terms of human existence rather than one based only on the preservation of architectural objects. From a theoretical perspective, it is hoped that this article will stimulate further developments with similar approaches to conservation, thus helping to overcome the impasse in which preservation seems to be trapped. On the practical side, taking the existential dimension seriously, especially in the context of culturally significant architecture, presents additional challenges that go beyond the merely technical problems of conservation, compelling stakeholders, institutions and conservators to negotiate and consider these issues in future proposals.

For architecture and its conservators, we suggest a philosophical compromise, rather than the merely practical accomplishment of inhabitation and the attainment of transcendental dwelling. In the contemporary world, since people dwell in a plurality of forms according to particular existential conditions, there arises the need to

establish perpetual open dialogues among individuals and groups. As already mentioned, the constant becoming of Dasein requires an always-changing position in order to stimulate human empathy. Dasein's own *conservation and care* of its place to dwell should not ignore that being-among-others that its existence implies. Cultivation and care emerge as fundamental attitudes behind conservation both in its relation to human being and its architectural place as the paradigmatic place to dwell, as well as in the form of the house in its intimate manifestation and in the form of the city in its collective one. The approach to conservation from an existential point of view, revealed the need to consider the architectural place as a part of the world-environment and not as a separate object. Architecture implies a place to live within. The condition of plurality of the world demands that we maintain an openness to integrate a diversity of horizons rather than a closure that fossilises, freezes and hinders communication between human beings. The call is for cities and homes to be open and not to be closed. Many others have had this uncanny dream before.

### *Epilogue*

Temporal and intemporal traces of the intimate and unavoidable connection between the worked stone – of a humble tomb or a sumptuous palace – and the flesh and mind of human being are manifested to consciousness as the uncanny personalised emanation that accompanies us constantly in the form of architecture.

Stone is a forehead where dreams moan, / devoid of curved water, frozen cypress. / Stone is a shoulder to carry time / with trees of tears and ribbons and planets.<sup>57</sup>

This poem by García Lorca seems to suggest those absences with which architecture is sometimes even more present to us than in its material factuality; it

does not make a difference whether it is to be born, to live, or to die, such as the unfortunate bullfighter to whom the poem is dedicated. Being *there*, if authentic Dasein, always will compel us to grow and to care about our place.

## Figures

Figure 1. Matrix of elements of existential determination of Dasein. (Own diagram)

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*.

<sup>2</sup> Brandi, *Teoria Generale Della Critica*, 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Brandi et al., *Theory of Restoration*.

<sup>4</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and method* p. 306.

<sup>5</sup> Ricoeur, *Memory History Forgetting*. pp. 150-1.

<sup>6</sup> de Beistegui, *The new Heidegger*, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> Cfr. Casey, *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* p. 175; Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* p. 43; Nicholson, Graeme in Polt, *Heidegger's Being and Time* p. 60-61.

<sup>8</sup> Some examples of controversies where stakeholders of the built environment do not approach with the same attitudes their architectural places can be explored in Herron, "Manchester's Second Coming – but Are Developers Destroying Its Industrial Soul?"; correspondent, "Liverpool Waterfront Heritage Status at Risk as Mayor Rejects UN Plea"; Wainwright, "Are Shoreditch Skyscrapers a London Tower Too Far, Even for Boris Johnson?"; Weaver and Jones, "Ridiculed Restoration of Spanish Castle Wins Architecture Prize."

<sup>9</sup> Ingarden, *Time and Modes of Being*, 1964. pp. 99-101

<sup>10</sup> This apprehension of architecture as event correlates with Ingarden's mode of being as event. Ingarden, *Times and modes of being*

<sup>11</sup> Brandi, *Teoria generale della critica*. p. 8.

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- <sup>12</sup> Ricoeur, *Memory History Forgetting*. p. 280.
- <sup>13</sup> Ingarden, *Ontology of the work of art: the musical, the picture, the architectural work, the film*
- <sup>14</sup> Cfr. Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey*; Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*.
- <sup>15</sup> Brandi, *Teoria generale della critica* Brandi. pp. 52-3.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 52. (Our translation).
- <sup>17</sup> Heidegger, *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*. p. 156
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 164
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid. p. 164-65
- <sup>20</sup> Brandi, *Teoria Generale Della Critica*, 1974. p. 308. (Our translation).
- <sup>21</sup> Heidegger, *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*. p. 181.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 180.
- <sup>23</sup> Brandi, *Teoria Generale Della Critica*, 1974. pp. 122-3 (Our translation)
- <sup>24</sup> Heidegger, *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*. p. 183.
- <sup>25</sup> de Beistegui, *The New Heidegger*. pp. 130-1.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid. p. 134.
- <sup>27</sup> Brandi et al., *Theory of Restoration*. p. 78. (Emphasis in the original).
- <sup>28</sup> de Beistegui, *The new Heidegger* p. 136.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 136.
- <sup>30</sup> Brandi, *Elicona. III-IV. Arcadio o della Scultura. Eliante o dell'Architettura*; Brandi, *Teoria generale della critica*
- <sup>31</sup> Heidegger, *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*. p. 185.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 186; Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary*.
- <sup>33</sup> Brandi, *Teoria generale della critica* p. 52.
- <sup>34</sup> Heidegger, *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)* p. 187.
- <sup>35</sup> Gumbrecht, *Production of Presence What Meaning Cannot Convey*, 2004. p. 58.
- <sup>36</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and method*, p. 120.
- <sup>37</sup> Cfr. Brandi et al. *Theory of Restoration*
- <sup>38</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 1989. pp. 156-7.
- <sup>39</sup> Brandi et al. *Theory of Restoration*. p. 48.
- <sup>40</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 1989. p. 158.
- <sup>41</sup> Cfr. "The Origin of the Work of Art" in Heidegger, *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*. He gives as example the visit to the temples of Paestum and Bamberg cathedral when the world of their work has perished.
- <sup>42</sup> de Beistegui, *The New Heidegger* p. 64. (Emphasis in the original).
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 64.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 66.
- <sup>45</sup> "[b]y 'Others' we do not mean everyone else but me – those over against whom the 'I' stands out. They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself – those among whom one is too." Heidegger, *Being and time* p. 154.
- <sup>46</sup> Brandi, *Elicona. III-IV. Arcadio o della Scultura. Eliante o dell'Architettura* p. 111. (Our translation, emphasis in the original).

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<sup>47</sup> Cfr. "The Origin of the Work of Art" in Heidegger, *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*.

<sup>48</sup> Gadamer, *Truth and method*. p. 11.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>51</sup> de Beistegui, *The new Heidegger* p. 57.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p. 70.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 71.

<sup>54</sup> Heidegger, *Being and time*. p. 374.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. pp. 70-1.

<sup>56</sup> Brandi, *Teoria generale della critica* p. 133. (Our translation and emphasis)

<sup>57</sup> García Lorca, *Selected Poems*. pp. 164-65.