

I used to say that:

“If you think of something as a novelty, it leads again to the hard law of innovation: if you change something it doesn’t mean it is innovative, to be innovative you have to change”.

In 2000, when I meditated on the creation and realization of a journal whose intentions deviated from what had always been accepted and proposed in the field of science, in the study and research of Cultural Heritage, it posed a dilemma for me:

“If you think of something as a novelty, it leads to the hard law of innovation: if you change something it doesn’t mean it is innovative, to be innovative you have to change”.

Then came 2001, with the first issue of the Journal “Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage”, which was published at that time in Italian, and was called “Quaderni di Scienza della Conservazione”; the English version came out in 2007. By that time, its initial intent had been scientifically achieved and validated, a fact which can be attributed to its interdisciplinarity, which then became transdisciplinarity or crossdisciplinarity and internationalization.

But during the twenty years the Journal has been published, and which has now reached number twenty-two, I have learned, from the number and variety of the authors’ scientific papers, with pleasure and conviction, the following undisputed truth, inspired by the freshness of the above themes regarding heritage protection and valorization.

Now I can say that:

“Without beauty there is no life. Every single life is made to come to light, to be word and action, to be the pro-creation and salvation of the world. Without beauty, which is also life that has been conceived, saved and accomplished, there is nothing to do in the world: no inspiration, no beauty”.

Salvatore Lorusso

EDITORIAL

THE JOURNAL “CONSERVATION SCIENCE IN CULTURAL HERITAGE” IN THE COMING YEARS: A COMMITMENT TO THE “CULTURE SYSTEM”

Salvatore Lorusso

Foreign Member of the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences

Mauro Mantovani

Dean Salesian Pontifical University, Rome, Italy

1. A wish for the coming years

Giving without asking, donating and thanking, engaging and sharing: if you are successful, if you are lucky to go through years that are uncertain and full of questions, as well as undergoing the viral aggression of Covid 19 and achieving positive results: that is the path to take to bring back certainty, open up new perspectives and invest in culture.

From multidisciplinary to interdisciplinarity, canons that have been pursued and achieved, from communication to relationships between scholars and institutions: this exchange is reflected in everything we have worked for, constituting an investment that always gives returns, even though at times it goes well and at other times less so.

Hence a conviction that is also a wish: “Over the coming years, we want to be even more accessible, and closer to the authors of the papers that are published, do more for culture understood as knowledge of both historical-humanistic and technical-experimental themes, all of which are needed so as to correctly face and solve the problems of heritage protection and valorization: therefore, giving without waiting for gain or gratitude for our work, but ready to share the results feeling proud of the seriousness that characterizes the Journal”.

Indeed, the challenges we face today are “epochal”.

As stated by Pope Francis: “Today we are not only living in a time of changes but are experiencing a true epochal shift, marked by a wide-ranging “anthropological” and “environmental crisis”. Indeed, we daily see “signs that things are now reaching a breaking point, due to the rapid pace of change and degradation; these are evident in large-scale natural disasters as well as social and even financial crises” (*Veritatis Gaudium* 8 December 2017, Foreword, 3). The situations we experience today therefore pose new challenges that are sometimes even difficult for us to understand, yet the present day stimulates us to see problems more as challenges rather than obstacles, opening up before us unprecedented and unexplored opportunities.

And this can also be done effectively through a Journal.

If you have reached a position of privilege after so much work, now is the time to repay the benefit derived from it. Even in this way we are closer to that native intent we believed and defined “Culture System”. We are referring to those synergies from cultural backgrounds, experiences, and skills from different academic schools, as well as the institutions, research centers, companies, territorial forces involved in the

“Culture System”. This is an acquired and functional strategy to be proposed as a model in other cultural realities.

With these intentions the Journal, after its first twenty years from 2001-2020, traces its future path with a new impetus and with the aim of applying and diffusing, in the study and research of cultural heritage, a common theory and methodology of the scientific principles on which both the humanistic and experimental sciences are based: this is, therefore, the transition that is needed to go from generic interdisciplinarity to transdisciplinarity or crossdisciplinarity.

2. Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity-crossdisciplinarity

In this regard, it is fundamental in the study and research of cultural heritage to underline, as already evidenced in a previous Editorial of this Journal, the clear distinction between the conceptual terms: multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity – crossdisciplinarity. Three different concepts which include different starting points, paths and objectives, and hence achieve different results.

Multidisciplinarity, in the sphere of knowledge deriving from specific disciplines, represents a simple summation of the said, which as such, remain connected to the individual contents and results.

Interdisciplinarity, which stems from the need triggered by multidisciplinarity, is not limited to juxtaposing the disciplines, it reflects and is open to different disciplines that necessarily interact with each other to reach a common goal and confirm the corresponding scientific content.

Transdisciplinarity-crossdisciplinarity is the successive step to take after the previously mentioned one, involving and dealing with the foundations, validity and limitations of the different sciences, and successive competences and relative contributions. It thus confirms the result of a common theory and methodology, on whose principles the humanistic sciences and experimental sciences are based, and which ultimately acquire a unique value and result.

What follows, therefore, is a gnoseology based on a new epistemological philosophy with respect to the epistemologies of the single disciplines which merely collaborate with each other. In this regard, a distinction should be made between these concepts and their meanings.

Gnoseology (from *gnosis* = knowledge through perception and *logos* = word or speech) studies the principles, validity and limits of knowledge which is, therefore, revealed, intuited.

Epistemology (from *episteme* = knowledge through study and *logos* = word or speech) is the study of knowing (learning) as a scientific act, a critical investigation into the methodology used by science which questions the validity of the scientific method, knowing what is above it and, to some extent, cannot be denied.

Therefore, both epistemology and gnoseology are needed, especially when we begin to distinguish between subjective and objective knowledge, the latter being specifically scientific knowledge.

In our case, therefore, what derives from this observation is: “How can we know the correct and full solution to the numerous and diversified problems concerning cultural heritage if not by involving the scientific input deriving both from the humanistic sciences, with their corresponding subjective evaluation (historical, stylistic, aesthetic and iconographic), and from the experimental sciences with their corresponding objective evaluation obtained through the use of diagnostic-analytical technologies?”

It seems appropriate here, to underline what Gillo Dorfles, an Italian art critic, painter and professor of historical aesthetics and, one of the most multifaceted personalities of the 1900s, said: “When you speak about aesthetics, you are speaking about the philosophy of art, which is obviously right, but it is good to specify that aesthetics has always been, not only philosophical, but also linked to other disciplines, such as anthropology, psychoanalysis, semeiotics”.

However, it is equally important to underline the fundamental contribution of the historical disciplines and highlight, albeit with reference to the aforementioned group of the humanistic sciences, that reciprocal need which characterizes artwork.

And with the above-mentioned emotional and sensorial characteristics, denoting emotive human qualities, together with those of a historical nature, referable to the historical-humanistic and philological-philosophical-social area, the set of values concerning other areas of investigation of art must also be considered: this refers to disciplines in the technical-economic-managerial area, as well as the legal-identity area.

This provides a concrete explanation of the meaning of the holistic value of cultural heritage as a set of values, and of the consequent importance of dealing with the various problems of protection and valorization of cultural and environmental heritage in a crossdisciplinary way.

In universities and research centers the situation is very different with respect to what was previously said regarding these concepts and their application in the corresponding structures in integrating the different disciplines, due to historical-logistic factors and aspects which are at times irreversible.

More specifically, in some places, non-acceptance confirms that the aforementioned problems of protection and valorization are addressed by individual disciplines and skills. In others, there are situations in which this integration is not concretely achieved with belief and conviction, as they can be attributed either to their overlapping, that is, to multidisciplinary, or to a formal interaction, that is, a weak form of interdisciplinarity.

3. The Journal: neither pyramidal, nor round, but ... jagged

What has been said up to now aims to fully understand the complexity that the holistic value of the cultural artwork presents and, which, therefore, imposes that in the pre-established intent, in the methodological path pursued and in the final result there must be some form of integration. In this regard, the following describes a specific case in which the Authors (of the present text) were directly involved.

The difficult transition from multidisciplinary to interdisciplinarity, pursued in 1989, in the first, chronologically speaking, Faculty of Conservation of Cultural Heritage of the University of Tuscia (Viterbo), in Italy, was continued in 1997, in the Department of Cultural Heritage of Bologna University. This led to the afore-mentioned synergy of the sciences, represented in research by the launching of the historical-technical Journal “Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage” and in education by the activation of the Master in “Planning, promotion and management of artistic and cultural events”: two emblematic examples of the integration between art and science.

What follows is limited to a discussion of the Journal.

The Journal and the scientific papers from different countries that have been submitted, evaluated and then published over the twenty years from 2001-2020, and up to the present, represent the product of different schools and scientific realities, bearing witness to those principles of internationalization, as well as “strong” interdisciplinarity which today has become transdisciplinarity, and on which the structure of the Journal rests.

Taking up the expression of the then Archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Mario Bergoglio, in the Latin-American Conference in Aparecida, in 2007 and replacing – perhaps disrespectfully but justified by the profound meaning inherent in the metaphorical term – “Church” with “Journal”, this is what was stated at an intercontinental level: The Journal “is neither pyramidal nor circular, but ...jagged”.

After all, the intuition according to which reality is not a “sphere” but a “polyhedron” is clever; a “jagged” reality cannot be fitted into a sphere or a pyramid, it has to be considered in its quality of being “jagged”: a perspective that is simple yet powerful in that it attributes and recognizes in everyone their uniqueness within an intrinsically relational context.

The interpretation of these terms leads correspondingly to the following meanings:

- “pyramidal”, synonymous with top-down and, therefore, referable to a few, with implications that are in contrast with positions and statements and even less with openness, discussion and commonality of intentions and objectives;
- “circular”, synonymous with unclear, with implications that are open to interpretation and, as such, questionable;
- “jagged”, synonymous with being in favour of, being diversified, being applied on a basis sanctioned by many and directed toward achieving a common truth.

4. “Making” authentic culture

This is how the commonality of a single scientific truth, the combination of cross-functional competences and the ongoing debate have resulted in the Journal’s transdisciplinarity, also as regards the training and employment market for young people.

Characterized over the years by a “*conatus essendi*” – a “*struggle to live*” – a desire to exist, to map out, to believe and, therefore, to demonstrate its role in the research and training of young researchers, the Journal can consequently pay back the benefits it has gained from the privileged position it has reached internationally by replicating its model in other cultural realities.

Thus, offering a contribution to the indispensable task of promoting, through scientific training and quality research, the integral “human flourishing”, safeguarding and nurturing the talents of humanity and professionalism that are present, above all, in young people, they can effectively bear fruit.

“One of the greatest joys that any educator can have is to see a student turn into a strong, well-integrated person, a leader, someone prepared to give.” (Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, Loreto, 25 March 2015, 221).

Indeed, we need people capable of living “in” society and “for” society, witnesses of a true and proper passion (*studium*) for culture, as well as for truth, goodness, justice and beauty. In this very concrete way, even a specialized scientific publication, such as the Journal, in promoting culture, manages to be authentically and brilliantly “popular”: if we speak of a people’s “culture” it is more than an abstract idea. It has to do with their desires, their interests and ultimately the way they live their lives. Therefore, to speak of a “culture of encounter” means that we, as a people, should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone. This becomes an aspiration and a way of life. The subject of this culture is the people, not simply one part of society that would pacify the rest with the help of professional and media resources.” (Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, Assisi, 3 October 2020, 216).

A winning commitment, which is also a shared responsibility, for the “Culture System”.