

MATERIAL PERCEPTION AND PSYCHOLOGY
IN ARCHITECTURAL CONVERSION

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Summary

The fast developing of mankind cast upon human beings the illusion of progress and comfort, but in reality can have a destructive effect. Objects around us have a very strong influence on our psychology.

The objects around us create the material world in which we live. They can have a very strong influence on our psychic and our interior conditions, enclosing in the same time the projection of the environment that created them.

Considering the psychology of a man – made form, we can draw some conclusions about different characteristics of social, ideological, cultural and political factors who influenced the final form of conception.

The restoring of historical monuments represent a process that soften the pragmatic look towards future, but the rehabilitation of old factories is regarded with skepticism by the investors who want to get a quick profit.

Here are some reasons to reconsider the revaluation of converting of old spaces.

Key words: historical monuments, industry, industrial heritage, conversion, form, psychology, identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

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2. MATERIAL PERCEPTION AND PSYCHOLOGY IN ARCHITECTURAL CONVERSION

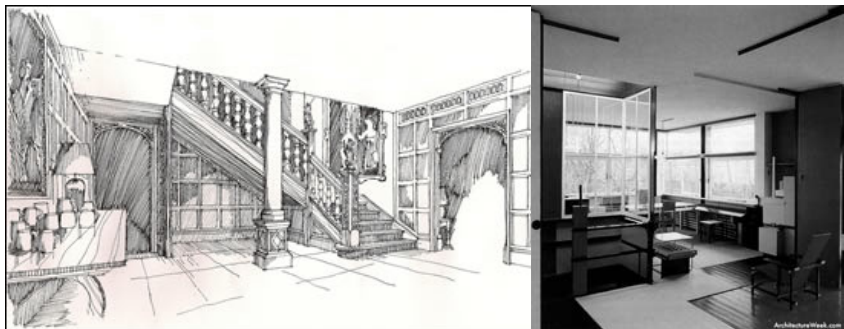
Having an innate instinct to create, man has made objects, integrating – in a conscious or not conscious way – the utility and the aesthetics.

First sign of discontinuity in this relation took place due to the first industrial revolution, because of the mass production. But, even if objects lost their originality, objects continued to have their aesthetics, which derived from their utility as an adapting to a perfectly coherent system – which was NATURE and her internal laws.

Nowadays the utility is no longer the result of physical factors only, but it is the result of PROFIT. Objects are designed to be useful but not to last forever, because new objects have to come soon and to replace them.

The progress of the new society is based on consumption and this we can very easily “read in the object world around us.

The interiors of the postindustrial houses are designed to be flexible, to adapt very easy to change. The furniture is composed by modules, they can be rearranged and changed in a multiple range of solutions.



The value of one object increases with the multifunctionality that characterizes it. But this freedom who bring the illusion of functionality and comfort give people a feeling of instability, and lack of identity of some certain space.

We all love to spend time in house of our grandparents, because there we feel the place where we belong. Here we feel safe, and our body and mind can find rest.

Considering another scale, even the industrial buildings had the same transformation. In the end of XIX and beginning of the XX century, big industrial buildings were adopting another structural system – from the multi-level steel



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structures – which were using the gravity as a force of transporting products between different levels – to the one-level system which used the new-invented horizontal conveyer. This type of structure offered the perfect multifunctional space, which could be adapted to the new-evolved technologies.

According to this rapidly evolution of a world in continuous movement we can feel the same uncertain equilibrium in human being. Man is overwhelmed by material world, and he desire to have more objects, as they change forms, fashions and level of comfort. So, the value of the things last more short time, as they are “up-graded” continuously. Everything is becoming to be more and more temporary. Even the structure of new factories is reversible and their pragmatic architecture has lost the quality of its attributes bringing them to the limit of functionality. The elements of architectural composition – such as space, volumes, light, the facades, become simple sentences that satisfy the minimum of needs for the factory to give profit.



Contemporary factory

As an antithesis of this trend of continuous change, there is the trend of conserving old objects, and so, to preserve the past of human civilization. Old buildings and old factories are reconsidered in urban and architectural developing, by aesthetic, cultural, economic and ecological reasons. This type of developing ensures in the conscious and subconscious of people the physical basis of their existence, because old forms are symbols of our passing through history, and of our identity. Such an object from past is more valuable than a new one, because it encloses a story – maybe about history of mankind, or about the developing of techniques.

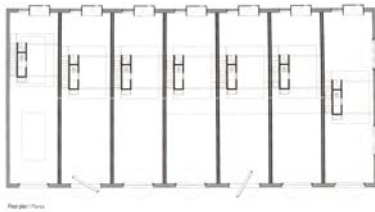
Conserving for example an old mill can tell a story about how people lived in that time, how were their social life in community, how they were managing the forces of nature – may that be a wind or water mill.

Rehabilitating an old factory who, after being at the periphery, was absorbed by the city, resolves the issue of the economical and strategically developing of the town, which has a limited and more and more expensive space, it resolve the issue of the ecological problem, by annihilating the pollution factors, and it resolves also the issue about the preservation of the landmarks of the town.



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But most important, this preserving of old forms it is insurance, a safety device of our existence, as Françoise Choay would define it. Rehabilitation of the old object lightens the weight of time, and makes calmer the developing of new things. The persistence of memory give the object an anthropological dimension and it humanize even the old factory, which maybe was in the past a place of suffering and struggle for existence.



Conversion of water shop into one-room flats – Entebaden, Switzerland

3. CONCLUSIONS:

The revaluating of past structures is an issue of maximum importance, because otherwise, in the name of progress we can wipe out our history, real values and identity. Because very few people do not realize this, there should be made a mass informing workshops and seminars, to help them understand the real value of their heritage in all its aspects.

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