THE LUMP IN THE RECOVERY WORKS: AN HISTORICAL FALSEHOOD OR A COHERENT ILLUSION?

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The general perceptive components of the materials are analyzed and considerations are made about their perceived form in contributing to the lecture of building objects and of environment; on this basis, in the recovery works a substitution of the original material with new ones is proposed, which are formally dissimilar but of such a nature to be perceived with the same sensorial result in a way to let relive identical feelings within coherent illusion.

Every anthropized environment reveals the presence of the man through the handicraft objects found on its territory: through their temporal sequence these objects express the technical and cultural evolution of past and present inhabitants. In facts, the building tradition and its transformations are maybe the most certain tools in order to document the cultural evolution of a people.

Of course, for a long time, it has been an easy duty to identify and circumscribe the cultural basins characterized by the same building tradition; even when political or military events had as a consequence an alternating of local or foreign dominant classes, it was not so easy for external cultures to upset the local cultural building tradition.

Maybe, the culture of an area is mainly the deep and acquired knowledge of the resources of this area, and this is showed by building techniques of the wood, of the stone and bricks, which can be associated with environments with prevalence of vegetal, or stone elements, or the poorer one of the earth, the clay, with its rich expressive power.

Every technology, even with a local development has paid homage to the conquerors, nevertheless avoiding a self-annihilation: it is to be remembered, for instance, the longobardic domination in Italy, where the decorative elements of the conquerors were fixed in the stone, these being users of the wicked work as an art form. These transformation processes create a parallel chronologically coherent with history, but the systematic re-use of the abandoned or plundered materials gives origin to a considerable discrepancy between the epoch of use or re-use and the dating of the handicraft object: it is sufficient, for this purpose to consider the enormous quarry represented in Rome by the monuments of the roman age along the Middle Age and Renaissance.

This approach, when discussed, could induce to discuss whether the present way of studying architecture history is debatable or not. For architecture scientists a building is the product of an intentional project, that is to say the concrete result of an "a priori-thought" project. On the contrary, one could postulate a more technical, but not lesser scientifical approach to the processing typology of the building as thought as an experience of a particular culture and therefore not as a property of the architect but a patrimony of the involved area, just beared in mind, in the projecting phase.

Neither opinion is refusable, but it is to be believed that along with the evaluation of an object the project intentions are to be considered, and these intentions are to be found in the building as a result of the perception of both formal and material aspects. That is to say that, the material characteristics, with their physical and chromatic different aspects become a way to realize volumes (thinking) which conclude in sensory perceptions.

The capacity of an architect is to be seen in his ability to equilibrate the volumes and materials which, by answering to the funcions, cause the sensations of the project synthesis. With today's refined production systems it is possible to obtain materials having exactly prefigured mechanical, chromatic and physical properties, even when coming from variable components; in the same way, with a suitable perceptive mixture it is possible to obtain the same sensorial effects starting from elements which are different from the original ones.

Paradoxically, the musical instruments having faced a deep evolution, a piece of Vivaldi is to be considered as an evident forgery, because the sound answer of today's instruments is quite different from that of the original ones.
Thereafter, is it important to ascertain whether the sensation one is living today is formally different from the one experienced in the eighteenth century, the emotional key of lecture represented by the present knowledge being able to reconstitute the original epoch?...
This is not possible today, but one lives undeniable sensations which are gratifying today! Thus, even within changed perceptive conditions, it is possible to experience a sensation which is correctly definable as agreeable.

It is soundly admitted that the perception of objects and environments is the sum of information read through the eye and decoded by the brain, as music is read by the ear and decoded by the brain; thus these are the devices which regulate the perceptive mechanism, the knowledge of the latter being the indispensable condition for the reconstruction of the sensation, which is after all the synthesis of the project and of the object at the same time.

The decoding procedures of the visual perceptions are in some way subjective, and it cannot be thus stated that an object can be read with the same sensorial intensity and quality by a number of subjects. The same is true as far as it concerns the time sequence, bearing in mind the epochal background which biases the decoding process of the seen object.

The paving-lump as a typological and building component of the environment, along with problems of restoration and renewal of historical centres, is alas! seen as a substitute solution which not always is in a position to re-propose the same perceptive gradient: in some ways it is only tolerated.
If the reading of an object is the sum of suitably decoded visual information, the possibility of input of new reading keys in the brain is not to be neglected: with the result of an enrichment of cultural knowledge.

The question arises whether by substituting the original matter the result will be ambiguous or paradoxical; this is true when the perceptions are used only to generalize data in a pre-arranged sequence, which is discounted (as in the elementary learning processes).
The seeming paradox is not resolvable if from generalized data and their discounted consequent succession, the new elements are percentually contained and through the perceptive novelty are in a position to induce new and suitable feelings.

The perception is continuously subjected to new comparisons, and it is thus by itself a creative novelty: this is perhaps the essence of understanding.
"Know yourself" has been the yearning of mankind through the centuries and in this sphere, through a suitable research of man's perceptive skilfulness and of the complex system of connections between sight and feeling, is the future of every building technique and technology.
Thus, out from necessity, no error has to be in having resort to the plainly dissimilar substitution: a substitution which through an illusion has to be able to create the same feeling.

I take a pleasure in thanking this audience, which allowed me to deal with this research field, in order to find the actual relationship of the handicraft objects which cause a substitute agreeableness without taking away anything to the harmony the planner thought.

Under this standpoint, some pavings made with their different dimensions, are the illusive but correctly substitute answer of the porphyry paving, cobbled paving and of the southern "chianche".
Thanks to the generalization fo the data, of the environment and of the pattern, the original material is forestalled but with a different matter. This novelty does not amaze, nor creates ambiguity but forwards consistent sensorial data: the form, the dimensions and the colour of the lump, yet dissimilar from the original one, unfold a novelty which justifies

the renewal as a cultural operation coherent with the environment: and the spectator is involved in this illusive sensation. Maybe the instruments have been changed but the score is the original one and the feeling is the same.

The environment, the landscape, the sorrounding buildings have to be protected and saved from their unceasing physiological degrading. Yet the attempt to impose at any rate and in every case the same original techniques and materials does represent with its generalization an attempt to subdue our perceptive qualities, mainly with the re-proposition of a falsehood, because everything is to be considered false when it replaces anything, even with plain and substantial accuracy: it is a question of a non-underlining of these saving proposals which paradoxically should have to be spurred.
Then, ther are several ways to build the cultural supports of man's unceasing evolution, which just in the handicraft objects leaves its marks.