es la que, en realidad, permite adoptar un concepto en el proyecto que es verdadero diseño.Quizás por eso, todos los buenos diseñadores posteriores lo han cultivado abundantemente y sin decirlo. De hecho, es la sabiduría de la profesión.

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'A Hot Cup of Consomée' Something between an essay and a dissertation on a possible aesthetic acception of the notion of utility proposed by Richard Redgrave about 1850

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Very often when we re-read authors whom time and the continual revisions of history have turned into classics and, therefore, far from current debate, we surprisingly bump into ideas and reflections which still seem up-to-date because they comment on phenomena we are still circling without finding their solution. The 'classic' authors I am referring to are, in this case, the English Reformers of the mid-nineteenth century, the group which collaborated with Henry Cole and took on the reform of industrial merchandise in Victorian England. This suggestive idea is a generic property of objects in use referred to by Richard Redgrave in an article of his and which, he explained, does not altogether belong to function, nor is it the exclusive heritage of form and, for lack of a specific name in the texts I have consulted, I dare to call —here and in other papers— aesthetic utility.[1] And last, in regard to the phenomenon described, I mean the observable fact that in our cultural environment, many people find coffee more tasty when it is served in a cup than when it is served in a glass while, on the other hand, they prefer their 'tallat' (coffee with a spot of milk) or their 'cigaló' (coffee with a dash of brandy, anise, etc.) served in a glass (especially if it is that small almost bell-shaped glass used in most cafés, especially the older ones of Barcelona) and, at the same time, hate milk coffee and tea served in a glass. It is worth noting that the-

[1] See CALVERA, Anna (1992). *Sobre la formación de William Morris*. Barcelona: Destino. See also: CALVERA, Anna (1997). «The modernity of William Morris». *Temes de Disseny* [Barcelona], n. 14 (December), p. 74-89.

re are people who declare exactly the contrary. However, we are not interested here in specific preferences, but rather in the fact that such determined preferences exist.

The issue could seem banal, at least in the intention of reflecting on it and even conceptualising it into a notion which, incorporated into a design process, could destabilise the historic function-form couple by introducing a third property of objects in use. But it could be even more difficult to believe from the start that it is such an up-to-date issue as I asserted above. If it were not, then how could we explain all this research on aesthetics of feelings, which justifies, for many designers (especially the post-radicals and the post- and neo-moderns) the decisions taken in a project as to materials, techniques, ornaments, and forms, adopted in many of their designs, without having recourse to the mere handbook of the trade?

Maybe before we begin it is worth considering the current phenomenon a little more deeply, to see if this has really been an issue which has been present in the several design options during history. In the first place, it is evident that behind the preferences which exist in the way of serving —and drinking— coffee, lie hidden many cultural and social issues which derive from people's upbringing, home behaviour, and habits imposed by a good education. It is also true that this habit, the coffee or tea ritual, has been disguised by each different ethnic group in a different way, in regard to specific solutions, following local habits and traditions. As far as I can see, in ethnic restaurants Arabs drink tea in glasses, as well as the Russians, while the Japanese, the Chinese, the Indians and other Orientals use porcelain or similar vessels, closer to our cups and bowls; on their part, the English have developed a very powerful industry which revolves around cups and tea-services. Something rather like this happens with vessels for alcoholic beverages. Sometimes each liqueur has a special type of glass, to the point that a glass designed and conceived for tasting any kind of wine has been assimilated here to Sherry wine, due to the massive use made of it in one geographic area. I must also say that, within the logic of social distinction, the separation between distinguished people and those who are not —what are usually called people with category— has been manifest in bourgeois culture precisely by the fact of having whims about the objects adequate for presenting food and drink, and in the fact that these whims are not only related to solemn ocasions, such as Christmas lunch, for example.[2]

It seems, then, that beyond the many solutions brought about by the vessels existing in today's world and the multiplicity of values implied by them, there is an aesthetic dimension which establishes their common denominator in respect to which options taken in a specific design are justified, as well as, in a second step, governing the use relation established by the user with a determined article, whether it be the contents —as in food products— or the mediating container —as in containers or vessels—. What is more, someone might perfectly well add that, on the whole, the fact of design itself very often emerges from these whims and the degree of attention paid them, above all when a designer has them.

When we introduce a variant so much in accordance with our times, such as new materials and plastics, the phenomenon becomes an even more peremptory issue. In a newspaper article on the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy a few years ago, Joan Barril annoyedly asserted that, plainly speaking, the best wine drunk from a plastic glass tastes like plastic and viceversa, that a bad wine improves when served in Bohemian cut-glass. They are not just comments from someone with refined taste; many people demand a specific kind of glass in a bar when they drink whisky or beer, without feeling snobbish for it. Many objections which arise as to how legitimate it is to generalise when speaking of cups of coffee or tea are diluted when we remember the taste of a plastic glass, always accepted as a lesser evil when faced with having to wash glasses or seeing them disappear in shards on the floor. If we take into account that all this has been recently avoided by container policies adopted by determined companies, the issue no longer seems so banal, not even from a strictly design point of view —where it no longer was— nor from companies' product strategies. To be more specific, the success or failure of a table wine in a carton container will be the last word on the issue exposed. I myself rather tend to believe that the idea of a carton container for wine will be a trial by fire for publicity's real power and that, if it wins, it will be a further step in the generalised process of giving up on the aesthetics of the senses which

[2] Bourdieu, Pierre. La distinción; and many more of his sociological studies.

characterises most of the great finds of industrial civilisation[3].

This disquisition only goes to confirm what I have said before. Behind all the behaviour described, we can observe the existence of a factor with aesthetic dispositions which operates during the use relationship, influencing it in a way not to be scorned. Another question would be whether and to what point this aesthetic dimension is exportable to all situations in which objects intervene and if, for this reason, it is one of the variants acting in the design process and conditioning the quality of its results. This would suppose that the designer, when acting as such, ought to take it into account in his work, and make a series of decisions with the only end of satisfying it. Now then, it is worth stressing that this is a slightly special aesthetic factor, as it is different from the purely aesthetic aspect. That all objects in use, useful or otherwise, conscious of their design or not, have an aesthetic dimension, almost an aesthetic motivation, has been recognised by almost everyone, and for a long time. This aesthetic dimension has always been conceived as a factor belonging to form, a consequence of the quality of the result obtained which, although it can be controlled during the project, or hoped to be guaranteed when maximum functionality has been achieved, is always a quality of the object seen in its entirety. Actually, when we speak of the aesthetic dimension of objects in use, we are referring to an object's capacity to bring about an aesthetic experience when we contemplate the object as such, and contemplate here means a subject who looks and an object foreign to him and which he recognises as such taken overall. It is the kind of perception that corresponds to the vision of sunglasses the speaker has, not the wearer —unless he is in front of the mirror seeing how they look— to use a fertile metaphor by Norberto Chaves[4]. However, the sort of aesthetic dimension we want to consider in these reflections is different. It is what the wearer of sunglasses feels when he is wearing them, the one arising when we come into contact with the object at the moment we use it and notice this contact; the one fixed on feelings felt and which derive both from the perception of touch and the image of the texture in which the feeling is visually translated. Actually, an aesthetic experience based on satisfaction when feeling a series of sensations which come through the skin and which can give rise to an experience as complex as that derived from contemplating forms. It belongs to sensuality, even if we consider it in the most colloquial sense of the word.

Needless to say, this is an aspect of the project which good designs have always taken into account, whatever the design trend they are working on in their own projects, as well as some companies when deciding on a specific design policy. Thus, for example, it has long been considered that feelings derived from contact with materials are important when deciding the most adequate in all components to be manipulated by hand, such as handles, as the most obvious example. In these cases, the final decision can depend both on functional reasons —such as heat insulation— and symbolic reasons —such as the need for a historical quote, contrast in materials, an increase in value because of an expensive material, etc. The considerations are much simpler in the well-known efforts by Bellini & Sottsass to find a material pleasant to the touch for the Olivetti typewriters and calculators; on their side, in 1958 Sony established a company image in which touch pleasure in all apparatus produced was as important as sight pleasure[5]. From the users' standpoint, efforts made by people who drive non-stop for long stretches to protect themselves from the heat brought about by car seats and to avoid the sticky sweat that is so unpleas-

[3] For some years now we have seen evidence of 'clamourous fiascos' in these experiments with new packaging for old products. In an article on 'free brands', Ricardo Rousselot and Montserrat Maresch numbered them: 'cream perfumes, mayonnaise in a spray, bleach in carton containers, cocoa paste in a tube...' but they pointed out as the only cause for the fiasco that these experiments are nothing more than 'attempts at changing the simpler codes which are deeply rooted among us' which 'are those that determine perception and, therefore, identification of a specific product'. No comment, therefore, on the aesthetic appreciation of the issue, even though the very idea of mayonnaise in a spray should provoke a certain reaction in this sense. Perhaps in the case of the bleach there is no pleasurable relation in the fact of using the product and manipulating the package, but this does happen in the case of serving the mayonnaise and eating it. Needless to say, experiments carried out with colouring added to food in the 'happenings' in the 1970 s had amply proved the kind of sensations generated by manipulation of food, and to what point this can influence the sense of taste, as all cooks very well know. It would be interesting to see what relation is kept up in the case of implements used in each case. see ROUSSELOT, R. and MARESCH, M. (1991) in *ADGràfica*, June, pg. 41.

[4] CHAVES, Norberto (1986). 'Encuadres' section in the *La Vanguardia* Sunday magazine [Barcelona]. As to theoric considerations on this way of conceiving the aesthetics of objects in use, see DORFLES (1950). In: *Le oscillazioni del gusto*. Chap. XVI, 2nd part: 'Esteticità indiscutibile', but only similar to what decorative arts had had historically, according to the author.

[5] DORMER, P. (1993). *El diseño desde 1945*. Barcelona: Destino. Thames & Hudson, p. 82.

ant in Summer, make clear how receptive the public is to this kind of relationship with objects operating at a body level contact. Actually, it is no more than the feeling of comfort so often talked about in the world of design, but which is rarely justified as a purely aesthetic argument.

However, it is quite curious that reflection on design —especially theories on design formulated by several trends along the whole spectrum of the Modern Movement— has never mentioned it, and that there is no comment in this respect, nor concepts adequate to deal with it. This is one of those truths —like many that refer to the designer's sensitivity— which project professors explain, and which is only taught in the practice of design. Thus, for example, if we heed the explanations given by Miguel Milà a few years ago (1986) in terms very similar to those by Joan Barril quoted above 'If you're given wine in a fine crystal glass, it tastes even better; while in a cheap glass, even if the wine is very good, you don't enjoy it so much'[6], even if we treat it in terms of taste and sight sensuality it can be interpreted as a simple synergy phenomenon that the designer takes into account and takes advantage of as such. The procedure is simple if one is conscious of it. As Milà explained a bit further on, in the case of having to design cutlery, 'I would keep in mind much more that the form be sensual, because cutlery is something you touch a lot; that is why touch is important, as well as temperature, weight, balance...'. However, if we move only between the parameters of function and form, what is the use of taking advantage of synergy? Is it a functional or aesthetic aspect? If we limit ourselves to having it as a means towards sensuality, there is no need to stress that it is a formally aesthetic phenomenon.

Italian Nuovo Design from Milan at the beginning of the 1980s tried a theoretic formula, calling it 'Primary Design', playing on the double sense of the word primary[7]. On the one hand, primary refers to the possibility of using raw materials in the project, and the aesthetic effects that can derive from this and are interesting for design: innovation in artificial materials creation, for which it is necessary to find colour, touch, and surface treatments, but also development of tints, colours, textures, and finishes for treating new or old materials opens up an important perspective for the intentional intervention of design on the final effects decision, something which is very important in architecture and interior decoration when applying them, even when space and environment are still considered a result of the quality of the surface of materials, and these the only decorative means used.

On the other hand, it is also called 'primary' because it is a design which works while becoming conscious, making recognisable and, therefore, intentionally induced, all those sensations of touch and body contact and, from the consequent visual representation, which are more immediate, more elementary and, logically, more primary in aesthetic perception, those which move the aesthetic experience itself. Clino Castelli was doubtless the most significant designer in this field. It may be illustrative to remember the words the critics then used to explain his considerations.

The problem posed by Castelli is therefore that of finding a language of surfaces which can interact with the complexities of our sensoriality, while trying to touch deep strata of our intellectual and emotional reactivity (...) in the sensual interior of the experience of thickness contained in the materiality of the object, and the chiaroscuro of the surface[8].

From an aesthetic understanding, what stands out here is the displacement of the stress towards the more elementary dimension of sensuality, sensitivity understood in terms of mere perception, or sensoriality if we take notice of the consciousness of the activity of the senses.

Probably where this work system has been shown to be more fruitful and more visible is in the new models of plastic laminates which have been put on the market since then. Once the nature of the laminates had been assumed as a surface to be treated, the solution has been not only the incorporation of an ornament with very varied graphic styles, but also working surface textures, sometimes turned into a new, abstract graphic pattern; sometimes into a new treatment of the surface, only perceptible to the touch. However, in the following years, this primary dimension of objects has abandoned the strict ambit of a sector of design —such as all the experiences with recycled materials currently carried

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[6] See the interview whit Miguel Milà and Juan Arias (1986). *Maestros del diseño español*. Madrid: Experimenta, p. 60.

[7] See BRANZI, Andrea (1984). *La casa calda*, the chapter on 'Primary Design' where he comments on projects developed by Cino Castelli on design of textures, colours and light. The theoric basis contributed by Branzi is the discovery of other 'tipi di strutture qualitative dell'ambiente [...] tute sperienze spaziali [...] legate piutosto alla percezione fisica dello spazio, cioè al suo consumo corporale', pg. 72.

[8] 'Mobili in rilievo'. *Domus* [Milan], n. 752 (September1993).

out— to go on to be theorised as a quality priorised by determined currents in design when facing a project and, as such, has become one of the traits identifying 'post' design. Called 'Qualistic Design' in the Anglo-Saxon areas and reformulated as a basic component of interface projects in machines, screens and any object, it defines that basic component of interaction between men and objects according to which the concept of design, as well as the quality of the object, depends on the 'soft' elements, which are things such as 'light, colour, sound, smell and touch, based on subjective factors such as colour which cannot be measured objectively'.[9]

That all these 'soft' qualities are important in object design has been known and put into practice for a long time by good designers, as has been seen in the examples quoted above. Probably the only novelty is talking about them, and from this derives what other theoreticians have called 'aesthetification of everyday life', operating precisely from non-functionalist design from the 1970s till now. As in everything modern, aesthetification simply consists in recognising subjective phenomena in design and then incorporating it into the project programme with a privileged status. However, the terms in which Primary Design was formulated offer many interesting points for an aesthetics of design. In fact, it opened a door to that aesthetic experience derived from body contact —of body consumption to use Branzi's words— which exceeds the feeling of comfort to become both a source of pleasure and aesthetic experiment. It is that operation by means of which feelings become an end in themselves and helping to live personal feelings, an end of design. Without going into a long disquisition on the psychology of perception and aesthetic theory implicit in any discourse referring to feelings, it is worth noting, however, that in this case the element to stress is the fact that sensations, when felt, when experienced, lead to pleasure or displeasure —as philosophers from Plato to the English empiricists have asserted— and that, even if this pleasure is not yet fully aesthetic, given its elementariness (Kant), it can be so from the moment it becomes conscious of itself and is cultivated as such (Epicurus); then delectation is produced and, sometimes, delight. Zubirri remarked that man is the only species that can feel as it feels and, when it does so while paying full attention, it gives a qualitative leap by which the sensation becomes a fully aesthetic experience.[10] This is a basic operation in the world of design, both for the designer who takes it into account and for the user when using an object. It is at this point where Primary Design is placed in its most modern formulation: having become aware of the existence of this aesthetic level, it has turned it into a project motivation for a sector of design. From here, we should step back to consider how all this was explained during the past century. The contribution of the Reformers, that is to say, the group of professionals organised around Henry Cole who collaborated in pro-design policies around 1850, is too well-known to have to explain it once again. In any case, it is important to remember that, among design historians, the reach of their reforms and the terms of their contribution to the culture of industrial design has been a widely-debated issue and we cannot say that there is a great agreement in their evaluation. We can find many interpretations, and it is significant that many historians have felt obliged to have their say. As the cohesive pressure group they were –Henry Cole, Owen Jones, Richard Redgrave, William Dyce, Matthew Digby Wyatt, Ralph Wornum and Gottfried Semper[11]– perhaps what best characterises their actions is the ambiguousness of the results they achieved. Even today they are uncomfortable and contradictory characters in the history of design. Sometimes they are not even given recognition for a real contribution to the field of industrial design, even though their reform was directed towards industrial merchandise; they are not even given recognition for the

[9] *Axis*, n. 39 (Spring 1991), p. 88.

[10] References to aesthetic discourse on sensation can be very long. For a concise and summarised guide, especially for the consideration of Zubiri, see Ferrater Mora's article in his *Dictionary of Philosophy*. For a more detailed consideration, see JAUSS (1977) *Experiencia estática y hermenéutica literaria*, Madrid: Taurus, 1992/2a.

[11] See Benevolo (1960) on the name of Reformers, and all following historians (Hesketh, Bøe, Campi, Selle, De Fusce, etc.). As to Semper's role in this group, Pevsner (1936) believed his influence on the group's ideas was decisive; however, Alf Bøe (1957) believed the exact opposite: for him, Semper was the one influenced and, while he was exiled in England for political reasons, he collaborated with the group as one of them (pg. 75). In fact, it is easy to see in books published by Semper upon his return to Germany, the presence of ideas developed in the English debate. Giedion's interpretation (1948, pg. 367-8) is similar to Bøe's. As to the extent of reform by Cole and his group, see Giedion (1948, pg. 360) 'his incapacity to offer a new artistic vision, that denied him a lasting influence'. Pevsner (1968, pg. 311) was even more categorical: 'despite their zeal and their talent, Cole and his friends achieved nothing'.

conceptualisation of design. However, they are an unavoidable chapter in any history of design. In these cases, they are reproached with having elaborated a mere theory of ornament, as well as having only taken up questions of decoration. Others present them as the inventors of the birth of modern design as a profession, both theoretic and practical, although they are almost never considered good designers. They thus become that sort of classic who, even though they clearly saw the problem, failed when resolving it in their professional activity, immersed and contaminated as they were in Victorin bad taste and the preference of the time for neo-rococco ornament. However, it seems proved that, among industrial, production, commercial and other later designers, the ideas defended by the Reformers had a real influence and that this was, also, much more fruitful and lasting than believed, according to the change in taste in England after their campaign (1860-1880); this also largely explains the commercial success achieved by Morris' company and the work of other advanced designers like Lewis F. Day or Christopher Dresser.[12]

In any case, there is one thing we can be sure of: the Reformers centred their reflections and activity on the problems of industrial merchandise and, besides trying to promote an improvement from the aesthetic point of view –their famous campaign for the improvement of public taste– they also discovered the aesthetic and production criteria particular to industrial production and the quality parameters derived from it. They did so at a very specific moment in history in which, on the one hand, industrial merchandise began to be obliged to compete in an international market –in those days, good taste and glamour were exclusively French and English manufacturers were used to going to Paris or Lyon to find fashion patterns to copy– and, on the other hand, in an internal and colonial market in which it was still necessary to compete, insofar as quality criteria were concerned, with an artisan tradition which contained the more or less idealised aesthetic values and type-models of objects –such as decorative habits and comfort models of the times. Therefore, in many things, as, for example when they defended the study of the great examples of the history of the decorative arts of the West and the artisan traditions of the colonies to understand the technical and functional reasons of consolidated forms, the Reformers' ideology often seems a defence of the old artisan common sense, to be recovered when carrying out a project for industry. From the comparison between the two types of objects, those springing from artisanship and those from industry, they established the rules which defined the latter, understood their nature, and delimited the criteria ruling industry design –this is the case of pattern design or wrought iron, for example. They also tried to derive aesthetic laws from this, those of 'good taste' which, from their point of view, were the same as those for good design.[13]

Logically, this is the aspect of their research programme which has been most discussed, and which is most arguable. In spite of all this, it was not essentially so different –that is to say, if we do not take into account that they applied it to ornament and decoration– from the aesthetic programme of many later currents in design, such as the Modern Movement, for example. Faced with the need of constant novelty required by industry to keep up its market, which, they asserted, brought about the great ammount of extravagance and absurdity manufactured at the time, the Reformers defended lasting criteria, constant quality, authentic and constant, naturally rising from the objects' being, and which was not artificious. For this reason, they searched for the laws of good taste, that is, a system of rules valid for all times due to its nature; quite definitely, an intrinsic goodness, as they called

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[12] See Peter Floud's research when he was curator of the V & A Museum, on the work of William Morris in comparison with what was produced in his time in the Catalogue of an Exhibition of Victorian and Edwardian Decorative Arts, 1952, London V & A. The famous book of advice on 'good taste' by Charles Eastlake (1868) which was then so successful, also manifested the influence of the Reformers' teachings.

[13] As to patterns and worked fabrics or wall papers, there are several articles on them in the *Journal of Design*. Perhaps the most representative is REDGRAVE's 'On Ornament, specially referring to Woven Fabrics'. Vol. I, number 2 (April 1849), pg. 32 ff. As to the programme, see the declaration of intentions in the editorial preface introducing the magazine [Vol. I, number 1 (March 1849)]:
'(you) will find throughout our pages something like a systematic attempt to establish recognised principles. It has been our aim to fortify all our more important criticisms (...) at least with the reasons on which they were based. In our examination of woven garment fabrics, chintz, iron, silver, we have endeavoured to arrive to the principles which ought to govern decorative designs in these materials'.
Also, the list of proposals for good design included in Owen Jones' famous book *La Gramàtica de l'Ornament*, London 1856, is like the conclusion of all this research.

it.[14] In their research, these were useful both for applying ornament and for designing form. They devoted themselves to find them and prove them, and they did so most especially in the pages of the magazine *The Journal of Design* (1849-1852) where they criticised, with examples, everything they considered ugliest and praised those objects which they believed were examples of good design –the famous «Review of Patterns» section. In their arguments they always justified their criteria, and thus went on to elaborate a series of principles for design which allowed them also to understand both the diverse conditioners of the design project and the components of the object in use.

From this point of view, the most suggestive aspect of their work is probably this understanding of the nature of industrial objects and the project criteria they propose. There are two issues to comment on in this sense. The first is the notion of utility and how they used it so as to make it become one of the ruling criteria of their whole theory of ornament; the second is what has motivated these reflections and which, at the beginning of this paper, I called aesthetic utility. In both cases, the author I consider is Richard Redgrave, editor of the magazine, author of the technical brief which evaluated the products exposed at the London 1851 Exposition[15] and, of the whole group, the person who most approached, in projects carried out and ideas defended, the figure of the modern industrial designer.

In most of his writing, Redgrave proved to be a defender of utility as ruling criterion when developing the design of an object. In his formula, he seems a truly modern author:

'Design has a twofold relation, having in the first place a strict reference to utility in the thing designed and secondarily, to the beautifying or ornamenting of that utility. The word design, however, with the many, has become identified with its secondary rather than with its whole signification -with ornament as apart from and even as opposed to utility. From this, confounding that which is in itself but an addition with that which is essential have arisen many of those great errors in taste which are observable in the works of modern designers.'[16]

In the same way, not taking into account what an object is for is the main mistake that ornaments of the time made.

Actually, in his theory, ornament can also be considered in functional terms. It carries out a generic function; decorating, evidently, but also making its use easier. The best proof of this is to be found in cases which do not obey this rule. Then, whether it is due to an excess of ornament, or to a bad application, the object becomes a nuisance. This aspect of his thinking explains why Redgrave cannot be considered among the functionalists; his concept of design does not proceed from functionalism: ornament is still, for him, a useful resource in the design process, and design means knowing how to work with ornament. This is his model of how to carry out a project: 'until the form best adapted for the required purpose has been obtained, and that refined to its most graceful line, ornament had better not be added'.[17]

It is worth adding that, in the industrial world in those days, and due to its own logic, a whole very developed industrial sector became specialised in ornament

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[14] 'There is a morbid craving in the public mind for novelty as mere novelty, without regard to intrinsic goodness (...). In the spasmodic effort to obtain novelty, all kind of absurdities are committed. The manufacturer in solid forms turns ornamental heads into tails and tails into heads, and makes the most incongruous combination of parts' ['Address', *Journal of Design*, Vol. I, number 1 (March 1849), pg. 4].

As to similarities to the premises of the Modern Movement, there are writings of Redgrave's in which these are even more obvious: 'The purest forms should be sought to the greatest convenience and capaciousness' [*Supplementary Report* 1851; Boe 1957 pg. 62]; 'So entirely is this the case, that it has become good taste to choose things from the very plainness, and from the absence of ornamentation, the redundance of which, with the select few is felt to be vulgarity'. 'On Ornament, specially referring to Woven Fabrics'. [Vol. I, number 2 (April 1849), pg.56].

The weakness of the Reformers' arguments, as later critics have pointed out, was to reduce everything to terms of taste and to consider their campaign as reforming public taste. Commenting on this aspect would lead us to a very long explanation. It must be said, however, that this is only to be understood if we take into account their very particular understanding of the industrial system, and that for them, wishing to influence public taste only supposed affecting the market, creating demand. On the other hand, behind the notion of good taste there was the research of a constant and lasting aesthetic model: 'Good taste, however, always remains the same and may be reverted to all times with satisfaction and pleasure' [*Journal of Design*, number 2 (April 1849), pg. 56].

[15] REDGRAVE, R. (1851). *Supplementary Report on Design written for the Commissioners of the Exhibition*. London. Long passages have been published by BØE, Alf (1957). *From Gothic Revival to Functional Form*. Oslo: Oslo University Press, p. 58.

[16] *Journal of Design*. Vol. I, n. 2 (April 1849), p. 57.

[17] *Journal of Design*. Vol. I, n. 3 (May 1849), p. 86.

manufacture; and this sector has survived to the present day. It is the embellishment industry (the 'industria del adorno' or decoration industry commented on by Giedion in 1948) now known as coating and finishing: patterns, wallpaper, textiles, flooring, skirtings, joint-covering, frames, banisters, railings, etc. In this case, when the ornament is the merchandise sold, the design of ornaments, of patterns, almost coincides with object design. In those days, when industrial development of consumer goods was dominated by the textile and metal sectors, this was one of the sectors which demanded most attention when considering design for industry. Redgrave had the problem clearly set out: 'But it is necessary to screw how excess of ornament is to be understood when we refer to fabrics where ornament would seem of necessity to be the principal feature, as in printed cottons, brocaded silks, paper hangings, carpets and the like'. Redgrave's subsequent considerations are in the strict ambit of form, in geometric laws and the value of simplicity, in the understanding of the ornamental module as design's basic reason in these cases, and in the stylistic characteristics which best suit them. As Gombrich has manifested, all this analysis centres on the phenomenon of perception when considering the aesthetic and decorative effects derived from it.[18]

Perhaps because of all this, the idea of utility acquires many different nuances in Redgrave's reflections. Thus, from the designer's and the manufacturer's point of view, when considering utility he advises the conditions in which the designed object is to be used, whereit will be placed ('Fabrics are not to be judged of merely in the piece, but with reference to their ulterior uses and making up'), in the same way, adapting to production conditions also makes up a factor to be taken into account when appreciating the aesthetic quality of a design because they considerably determine the result ('the acme of beauty of design is only to be attained when the system of ornamentation is conducted in strict accordance with the scientific theory of production') and, finally, also the material and how it is treated and profited by design influence its aesthetic results ('The aesthetic values of design are seen in their relation to qualities of material').[19] The greatest novelty, however, lies precisely in this latter case and how Redgrave then explained the effects of material on aesthetic appreciation of objects. Besides, when he explained it, he defined it in terms of utility, a level of utility which does not coincide with standard functions, but rather with delight during use. It is worth quoting the whole of Redgrave's argument:

'Now it seems to me that there is one simple principle which you as purchasers overlook, and which our designers do not sufficiently consider, and that is utility. Do not misunderstand me: I do not refer to that common and obvious sense of utility which is apparent to everyone by which we know that the use of a carpet is to cover a floor, or a glass to contain a liquid, or a paper hanging to decorate the walls of our apartments; but to a more hidden sense, would save us from many errors both of a choice and taste. Thus a carpet, whilst it cover a floor, is also the ground from which all the furniture and the various objects in the apartment are, as it were, to arise: it should therefore be treated as a flat surface, and have none of these imitations of raised forms or social architectural ornaments so often seen. The colours should be without violence either in hue or contrast, that they may not intrude upon the eye to the disadvantage of the more important objects placed upon the carpets (...) utility also consists in shewing the crystal clearness of the water, or the ruby brightness of the wine that mantles in it'.[20]

I believe then that it is quite clear. As we can deduce from the quote, there are several levels of utility for an object of design: the obvious one which comes from common sense; the one which arises when studying everything which can be deduced from the way of carrying out a utilitarian activity in a specific context; and, in the third place, the one which goes deeper into the enjoyment of an activity thanks to the sensorial and perceptive qualities of materials, and because of them, which increases the aesthetic effect of objects and improves their relation in use. Perhaps this is only a strategic resource, but it is curious that, as Redgrave argues, this aesthetic end is a form of object utility, one of its utilitarian components. That is why his analysis

[18] See 'On Ornament specially referring to woven fabrics'. *Journal of Design*. Vol. I, n. 2 (April 1849), p. 32. See also: GOMBRICH (1979). *El sentido del orden*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1980.

[19] References in order: *Journal of Design*. Vol. I, n. 1 (March 1849), p. 6; Vol. II, n. 7 (September 1849), p. 2; REDGRAVE, R. (1851). *Supplementary Report on Design written for the Commissioners of the Exhibition*. London [BØE (1957), p. 62 and 61, respectively].

[20] 'Canons of Taste: Carpets, Paperhangings and Glass». *Journal of Design*. Vol. IV, n. 19 (September 1850), p. 14-15.

surpasses, avant la lettre, the conceptualisation of design expressed as merely the relation between function and form. Because of this, but also because of respect towards the stylistic simplicity in which Redgrave speaks, I have named it 'aesthetic utility'. Actually, it would be necessary to consider if, in fact, it is not a first conceptualisation of the notion of aesthetic function, exactly as it has been elaborated in the field of theoretical aesthetics. On the other hand, in regard to aesthetic reflection per se, Redgrave introduced sensuality and sensorial sensitivity as new aesthetic ends for objects, which becomes a complementary dimension of form contemplation. It is worth adding that, when treating of design and objects in use, we are to understand sensitivity as an almost erotic simplicity, and which redounds to enjoyment in itself.

The similarity of considerations with examples of design quoted above are now quite manifest. If in the case of Primary Design the issue was the isolation of this kind of utility for the fact, a substantial change, that the project had not only to take advantage of the qualities of existing materials, but also decide the qualities of a material at the moment of their creation; in Redgrave's it supposed turning it into a basis for the design project, integrated into the creation of objects in use by industrial methods. Thus laid out, the road opens out towards acceptance of the kind of ornament Loos defended and used in his interiors. But, besides, in the case of Redgrave this aesthetic understanding of utility allowed him to understand the innate nature of each object in use which is, logically, the way of using it and deriving the form criteria adequate for each case. This argument is the basis of his defence of bidimensionality in patterns, fabrics, and the rest of bidimensional ornaments, of the bidimensionality of all volumetric perimeters in the case of tapestries, of the lack of raising or lowering in carpets, of verticality in wall-coverings. Quite definitely, this kind of hidden utility allows the adoption of a concept in the project which is truly design. Perhaps due to this, all the good designers who have come afterwards have used it quite often, without saying so. Actually, this is the wisdom of the profession.

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