The Power of the Point

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INTRODUCTION

This paper essentially explains an assertion on the global context; one coming from the field of architectural design and offered in direct response to the invitation to speculate on "architecture's future role in a changing global economy". The following explanation includes a series of notes with respective quotes from previous works, which tend to underscore that, inasmuch as the permanent objective is to verify the capacity of each architectural point to reach the city as a whole, this implies working consciously with culture.

DESIGN AND RELATIONS

By applying a quality particular to designers, such as foresight, in this case to architecture in general rather than a specific intervention, it is possible to affirm that architectural design will help economic liberalization -aimed at a global market- to develop in consistency with recognition of the existence of a human culture, also on a global escale[1].

This assertion is based on two feasibilities that come together in design: a technical conceptual feasibility and one originating with the current world situation. The first refers to the possible projection of certain concepts currently relevant to the field of architectural design; namely, the idea of the "point", which has been associated with the idea of a building. For example, if the point is defined as what is total in spacial terms and if the sum total of what exists is assigned the nature of one large point, it is possible to determine the conditions of the relation between one scale and the other[2]. In fact, this relation includes two types of relations: zonal and sectoral. Zonal relations are those having a point with its different degrees of environment; sectoral ones are understood as spacial systems linking each point with all others.

The other feasibility, originating with the economic trend in today's world, involves the idea that aspiration to a global market can be considered an apex of sectoral relations. Consequently, an attempt to reach the maximum complementary level in zonal relations is also possible.

Going from feasibility to fact, academic design updates itself in terms of the designer's ability to work with relations[3]. This essentially involves transforming sectoral rela-

tions into zonal ones and viceversa, which is the same as working with scales in their condition as such. The result, in the field of design is emergence of a desire to arrive at what is economic in its most global scale, particularly if, on the one hand, the sum total of what exists spacially; that is, total inhabited space, the world point or whatever it may be called, is determined as having a design, which exerts an influence on any and all specific designs. Another factor is having determined that one way to define what is cultural, in itself, is to identify an irreducible relation between what is economic and what is social[4].

RELATIONS AND SPACE

Within architectural design, one perceives a future task contributing to the world context. By the same token, the promise or guarantee toward the outside is based in the suggestion that all relations have a spacial connotation, particularly in terms of the most complex aspect of space; namely, spaciality. When things are related it is because they are mutually inclusive in some way. With inhabited space, users are in space and it is in them.

A conceptual reconstruction of the history of architecture and the city, viewed as mutual inclusion of the two, is the prime objective of the aforementioned proposal. Consistent with evolution of this sort, we now find ourselves at a stage where the city is adhered to architecture. In other words, architecture is present in an intangible way that allows the city to be represented in each point in a total way[5].

Development from the present urban condition will continue based on spacial relations concentrated in the architectural point: i.e., physical, human and socioeconomic ones. The physical relation refers to the point regaining its esthetic autonomy as architecture and, without detriment to the same, orientating its current representation of what is urban toward the real city of the future. The human relations indicates the total spacial memory of the past and future found in each user or individual point will be indispensable to this physical effort of architectural point. The socioeconomic relation shows how prevalence of what is time, economy and function toward the point will eventually lead to and constitute

a basis for development of what is space, social and environment from the point.

In this way, global development of architecture and the city amply satisfies the connection between relations and space. The function of buildings, in their future role, is to constitute a world projected from themselves, using the environment within their reach in terms of preexisting architecture found in every stage of this development. Users, in turn, must associate their exclusive memory of these stages with what each construction and its environment offers them. In summary, this is total foresight based on all that is preexisting.

The effort expended by architectural points and users becomes an up-dated an projected version of what is social, in spacial terms. Its reward will come in the economic field because the economy, as we know it up to now, is a sectoral development occurring at the expense of the most global of all zonal relations: nature. The total zonal quality emerging from each artificial point will be an economic source which, in unison with all others, will be comparable to the original natural source. Concretely, the power for the future of the point can be summarized as follows: build the economy through what is social.

SPACE AND TEACHING

Everything is related to space, even things not specifically spacial. In this context, architectural design will make full use of the teaching possibilities offered, on the one hand, by the scale of its products, which can be inhabited by people or can inhabit them, and, on the other, by the intrinsic pedagogic nature of design. The goal is to guide the general course of human affairs through a highly complex world situation. One thing in favor of this objective is the fact that, beyond what is economic, social and even political, esthetic ideologies are being tested[6]. These are capable, for example, of including each user, architecture, the city and all of inhabited space in a single relation[7].

In terms of applying ideologies of this type, it appears the next power of the architectural point is its "power to teach" particularly by up-dating what "social" signifies to a building; that is, achieving urban totality through each point.

In this way, with respect to the learning process in itself and for the immediate future, the old saying "rather than give them fish, teach them how to fish" is expanded to "teach them how to fish teaching". It is as if no one in the world context can extract themselves from a constant pedagogic attitude. This is particularly true in the professional field of teaching through the products of that enormous sough-after global market. Consequently, no matter if fish is given for every day service and fishing is taught for life, the way of teaching to teach could achieve an economic effort equivalent to creating a new fish for the universe, simply on the basis of establishing a relation between the cultural whole of the teacher, that of the learner and that of the user.

CONCLUSION

Should world markets fail to open, they could be summoned to this task from the specialized field of design. This is not merely because opening represents a spacial notion in itself or because the existence of open markets is logical in an era subsequent to one having the urban business center as a contemporary agora, but due to the feasibility of relating each point of economic wealth in the most industrialized countries to global wealth, via the social process in the least industrialized countries.

NOTES

[1] The identity between design and culture is expressed in what is perhaps the most ambitious supposition: the belief that all that exist have a spacial form. In short, the world constitutes the most extensive point conceivable and its evolution follows a path similar to the flight of a boomerang, not because it moves like a boomerang but because it is "always at the same point", one constituting its place of departure and arrival. The world develops outward, in a straight line, making a broad turn toward the zenith of its journey before undertaking the return trip, all within the same great, unitary point. In this theorical terms the straight line advances up to the modern stage and, at this moment, we are at some point linking the straight line with the turn -which is essential to foresight- but not without first sensing the postmodern. In other words, what we did in the straight line will have to be learned in makig the turn. The definition of global design corresponds to developmental forms such as those described earlier, which are identified with what is cultural.

"Boomerania is a term invented to describe the way the world develops. As a name, it alludes to the returning action of the boomerang"... "Since it is impossible to view all things simultaneously, be it through natural or artificial means, the suggested method is purely interior. One begins by picturing the world landscape as a whole, which implies devising a mental image of all that exist therein. The first step is to conceive the different dimensions of this landscape, time included. When this have been accomplished, one can begin to fully conceptualize the world's movement by watching it evolve as it builds, within itself, toward an appropriate point in time and space. Eventually, in what is perhaps the most demanding stage of this appreciation, one must try to understand how the point of arrival relates to the point of departure. These are two diferent wholes within a single unit."..."Although the landscape in question has a variety of outstanding features, its holistic movement or construction is of prime interest; that is, its construction of something equivalent to the environment where construction occurs."..."However, it also raises difficult questions, particularly with respect to whether or not the world has a design that supports the constructive outline suggested earlier."..."Naturally, a look at the world's general outline shows the universal environment in which we live and design to have a special shape or form that transcends or goes beyond the control of human action, but also is rooted in the essential intervention of every human being.

Given this sort of mutual involvement between the world and the individual, it is practically impossible to determine, for example, where ideas begin and end in the field of design."..."Ultimately, nature is both the eternal protagonist and the eternal setting. In its original form, which is interpreted

as the starting point, nature accompanies and serves as a type of world-environment for all human effort intended to transform it and achieve a level of synthesis equated with social perfection. The latter, in turn, also is interpreted as the point of arrival."..."These attributes become indistinct, as can be observed if one penetrates the ideal world landscape contemplated initially from without, and places oneself at the zenith inherent in any two-way journey. There, one can appreciate what it means to have lived within this process: its vast outward course, which moves into a straight line, and the curve or turning point, both of which precede arrival at the zenith."

"A world's or construction's nature is received by man, and as such it may be considered perfect. Its model may be represented by any of the environment's natural landscapes. In it, every point, element or fragment of it is beautiful and the relation between these or with respect to the total scene is also beautiful, scene equally beautiful on any scale and in this way, landscape after landscape. Man, who naturally receives himself, may perfect the perfect. This is the model for human or artificial constructions.

Assuming each existing building or structure as a whole, in order to relate it to the world's total space, there are obviously as many possibilities of physical point-to-world combination as there are structures in the world. This is kaleidoscopic potential.

In order to truly achieve kaleidoscopic aesthetics, each structure designed and constructed recognizes that the way in which it relates to the whole world scale are its immediate and mediate surroundings; natural or artificial, preexisting or yet to come and considered individually as well as collectively."

[2] Via different routes, one arrives at the conclusion that culture responds to a model with a pair of elements dealing, in one way or another, with the relation between the global whole and each individual whole or point. These pairs include, for example, economy and society, architecture and the city, and science and art. Each pair of wholes always develops in a concomitant way, and existence of the two elements is irreducible. In other words, regardless of any contradiction between the two, neither can make the other disappear. At the most, it obliges the other to form another pair.

"The multiple expression of what is complete has a binary make up which allows us to go beyond it, to see the relationship between the pair of which it is composed. In this case, the relationship is expressed by an architectural intervention's dual role, as part of the entirety of the overall inhabited space and, simultaneously, as something itself complete.

A particular inhabited space's complete character may not only be the most conceivable -because it includes both the global and the individual- but also permits coexistence of extremes. Not just any type of coexistence, but one necessary to make up a complete thing: that is, one that allows interventions be part of the whole and complete points at the same time.

Just as the make-up of the whole in terms of inhabited space may establish, for example, limits between architecture and the city, in order to better define each, there is also the risk that development of one may cause the detriment of the other."

"For that reason, we will use Stonehenge to test an interpretation of "complete", as expressed in what today is called a city."..."In the interpretation of Stonehenge, the principal protagonist is the whole, as related to space. We also believe that wholeness may be expressed in several ways: as the whole in itself, as the overall whole, and as a whole point. Stonehenge expresses the whole in itself, through its unitary form. The overall whole is expresed through the developnment of the circle theme, and the whole point is shown in each vertical element."

"The most recent method for referring to the future of architectural design and the city is net-design. This term itself is an appropriation of "network", which implies a type of network not merely among professionals in the area, their written thoughts or illustrations of their works, but through their handiwork itself; that is, through each building's own capacity to originate a physical network spreading out from it all over the world.

Therein lies the value still being given to a building, or any particular construction, with respect to its condition as a point in space, that is, container of all inhabited space."..."There seems to be a cycle or complete round of occurrences to this process which hinges on the spacial versatility of the sun, since all cosmic construction centers on this star, as does every construction on earth."..."This condition on one part converts the sun into the precise referent of the two dimensions of the point: all for it and then it for all through the rest of the points."

"We may translate this into human terms by observing that the whole may be both individual and collective, and whether the wholes complement one another. Others advocate that these concepts are not whole, that they are independent of one another, or that the whole is simply a sum of individual points; although -of course- the fact that they are opposite ideas make them necessary to ours. New interpretation of architectural also leads to complementary relations: resolution of the traditional dichotomy between a development project's economy yield and maintenance of local community ties, or clarification of the scientific-artistic duality in something specifically scientific and in something specifically artistic, or harmonization of interest between the use of nature and its ecological demand. However, it may be concluded that the area with the greatest possibility for favorably reconciling opposites is the strictly human domain, more exactly, its cultural aspects. One might also conclude that opposites must necessarily be reconciled violently. However, the violence must occur within an environment of multiple total culture protagonism. We are all intrincate in culture in itself and our intricacy is essentially the interrelation between the global or overall culture and specific cultures or cultural forms. All of this, as it is expressed in spacial terms."

[3] Going beyond designers to a purely personal plane, design and culture are part of a triad involving the most routine levels of individual recreation. In all cases, relations behave the same: it is only in cultural aspects where things appear more designed; namely in harmony with a global design. Whereas, in the field of design, there is always the latent possibility of change, and recreation becomes the maximum expression of this change, given the speed of evolution developed by an individual when enjoying himself.

"The fact that what is natural is present up to the point of arrival is one of the two basic conditions needed for the boomerang-process to complete its course. The other is that social perfection, or utopian recreation, is present from the beginning. This is a counter-process with respect to the first condition. One extreme of this counter-process wherein the point of arrival is present from the point of departure, which also explains why we refer to it as "utopian recreation", is the presence of man in original nature or Creation. In this sense, man is nature's utopia by being the first or original utopia from which all social perfection in Creation springs. The opposite extreme of this counter-process is a human creation or recreation constructed within the world and equivalent to it, precisely because the world sets the pattern for its construction. This is the point of arrival at true utopia, or the utopia of utopias in a futuristic sense: that of creating within a world created by man. In short, utopian recreation.

The relationship between departure and arrival appropriately expresses the vast importance of another subject: creativity with respect to world's movement in general. Each creative gesture in daily life activates tangible and intangible bonds that provide a two-way link between Creation and utopian recreation. In fact, any movement of any scale partially or totally expresses some type of creativity. On the other hand, exposure to references whose content is man and his creation within connections, limits and the like also represents an encounter with the eternal problem of freedom in general, and design in particular. This obliges us to turn to a subject that encompasses all of the foregoing; that is, perfection, especially when understood as an absolute process with various stages. Accordingly, by having human beings, nature -which is perfect in essence-shows itself to be perfect as well as perfectible. Each human being is constituted in a perfectible perfect way so as to demonstrate their own quest for perfection through the workings of mankind as a whole. Is this perfection, which is received and achieved at the same time, the equivalent of freedom to be designed for design?"

[4] In terms of architecture and the city, the point's absorption of what is urban can be viewed as economic consumption, while development of the city by the point can be considered social production.
"When analyzed jointly, two phrases corresponding to apparently unrelated moments in the life of Simon Bolivar, El Libertador, become the closest thing, in economic and social terms, to a conception of all that exist and is expressed by multiple individual totalities and one global totality: "...man should do not what is attainable but what is authorized by law..." and "...to live, society needs gold in its veins." A broad interpretation of these statements leads to generic definitions of "the economic" and "the social" and how they relate to one another; definitions presented here because of their association to the specific topic of inhabited space."..."In thoroughly deducing the significance of a few words that convey a message still considered valid, what is "economic" in the first phrase is apparently represented by something that prompts individuals to do what is attainable; that is, a type of impulse in man, without which nothing would ever occur. However, this impulse alone is insufficient to authorize acts or deeds. Individuals can also conceive and achieve works intended to guide their actions. The law is one example and, according to this line of thinking, it would support and be synonymous with what is "social". Therefore, society can be defined as a human establishment where consideration is given to how attainability influences individual acts and what the culmination of these acts would be if accompanied by their specific complement; that is, authorization conferred by everyone.
In the second phrase, the "economic" element would be represented explicitly by "gold". Accordingly, the existence of this wealth or economic essence is clearly a requirement for the social element, which is something of value. Naturally, gold is also valued, but in a different way. Interestingly, what may be the most contradictory of all elements is suggested as a requirement for what is social."..."This apparent contradiction can be clarified by combining these phrases to show that neither gold nor any other form of wealth is equally present in nature, but in the proportion sufficient for each individual to experience the conflict of attainability. To what point do individuals let themselves be driven by economic or "natural" impulse, and to what point do they accept and contribute to the social or human element. In other words, the basis of what is economic, found partially in nature, prompts individuals to act in a way that creates, within each person, a contradiction to the portion that -equivalent in their own individual totality to what gold is for said nature- stimulates them, in turn, to develop society."..."The

hub would be man as an economic being and a social being; one who is attracted on the one hand, by natural gold and, on the other, by "social gold" or "social wealth" which is something only human beings can develop. Is this not what we call principles or values?.
In more general terms, contradiction of this sort can be explained as follows. If all that exist is part of a whole, the latter will be global with respect to the natural origin of all things, while including human individual totalities at the same time. Each of these would be made up of the same elements comprising the whole, only arranged differently. Ultimately, this is nothing more than articulation -within each individual human being- of the two expressions that grasp the totality of what exist: the individual as part of global totality -or the combination of all things- and as a totality in himself that includes all others."..."From a more temporal standpoint, the movement of scales in its early moments -more natural or predominantly natural- would have characteristics consistent with the absence of an external context to the maximun and primary scale, such as that of authorizing specific egoism, also at its maximun. At the service of the specific point is all the functional impulse furnished by nature, coupled with economic progress permitted by man's conquest of this impulse and control exercised over the essence of the benefits of progress by an individual -capitalistic- head. In more social moments, each particular point -without omitting its natural essence as a point- will understand that it also embodies all human points including its own. This impulse is sufficient to attain the totality of things as a potential external context."..."The dual role of architecture and the city is fundamental to a spatial understanding of "progress", which is an important aspect in economics. This implies accepting the existence of a stage in the development of things that is affected by economics, specifically by levels of progress. It also means understanding this cannot occur unless something prompts an individual to act in a progressive way. However, for this to happen, it is necessary to detach oneself from the other form in which this impetus presents itself, which is also related to the individual.
There is a major stage in the development of inhabited space where architecture encourages individual development through "consumption" of one of its urban components. The other -due to detachment of what is architectural- is deferred until, at a subsequent stage, traditional individual progress combines with this accumulation of "deferments", which are eventually suited to socially "produce" urban architecture."

[5] Establishing cultural categories to interpret the development of inhabited space presupposes basing evolution on the quality of wholes to be mutually inclusive, on understanding inhabited space as all that exist in spacial terms, on expressing evolution through the relation between what is architecture and what is urban at an intermediate level with respect to the former, on admitting that artificial construction will never replace nature entirely, and on maintaining a key reference for what is cultural in the stage of evolution particular to "cultivation"; that is, the rural stage with its explicit references to the relation between zonal (village) and sectoral (peasant homes). Just as all cultural stages of space will coexist perpetually, the spacial memory of each user is an exclusive synthesis of these stages.
"From the indigenous village there is the beginning of the network made up of huts, with respect to volumes or discontinuos elements and the open space or vacuum between them as an element of continuity. This is just as in the cosmic space and the forest, and the same as with the surface of the globe considered as a great floor which is part earth and part water. Over this surface predominates a vacuum as great continuity within which are mountains ranges, isolated peaks and forest. Between the mountains are valleys and when these are very closed

another form is suggested, that of the volume as a continuous element and the vacuum as discontinuous. It is in the colonial village where the unified coexistence of one of the two networks is plainly developed, the continuous volume in the structure of the walls and interior spaces of a block and the inverse in the grouping of blocks. In the republican street the users of the public domain themselves -as constructed things- are vertical volumes, loose and mobile."..."What occurs in the modern phase with respect to the physical network of inhabited space is that it culminates a very important development. This is the continuous volume network placed in a vertical position, as physically the other is not possible due to the law of gravity."..."Once the vertical succeeds in its dominance of the facades and particularly through the way of using the windows on the republican street, the network of window-framing converts from just a part to practically all of the modern building."..."The fact that in a period of great consciousness with respect to design in itself results in coming up with networks, allows association about these between the transformation of the world, man and design. This is where the transformation would be the step between the organization of the world in the form of natural network and the social network. Man as a user of space, would be constituted by two types of networks; while design would consist in the capacity of working with both. In that concerning the modern period, this is expressed in an explicit network and another that is tacit in the form of a material invented to be both volume and vacuum at the same time: glass. Thanks to a combination expressed in this way, the two dimensions of man -the individual whole and the collective whole- are lived in this period as humanity in general and the individual in general."..."A brief, idealized description of the major progressive stage would show a series of minor stages through which architecture progresses with respect to the city. In doing so, it uses the urban expression within itself as a form of collective integration; that is, independent or autonomous forms of architecture that are capable of communicating with one another because of their total urban essence. This progression implies motion that gradually separates architecture from the different levels, which also have an urban expression in the form of integration with the environment: the overall environment, the natural, the artificial, the urban, the public and the architectural in itself.

Prior to the first minor or pre-rural stage, there are several more natural and comprehensive pre-stages where inhabitant and inhabitable are virtually the same. In other words, these are the pre-stages that go from man-environment to simple use by the former of shelter or protection provided naturally by the latter. The pre-rural stage consolidates around the construccion of man-made spaces for habitation. At this point, man relates entirely and directly to nature in an economic aspect. As originators of what is artificial, these spaces convey a comprehensive presentation with respect to architecture-city: both fused and without distinction. For example, space inhabited by every family, by religious and governmental hierarchies, areas for work and others are all part of one great, communal dwelling. If, in the course of intervals preceding the pre-rural stage per se, a comprehensive architectonic-urban detachment occurs with respect to what is purely preexisting in nature, while maintaining a total symbolic reference -the impulse- to what is not man made, from that moment forward progress comes in stages. The first of these is development toward the rural stage, which is "colonial" or "medieval", as the case may be. There, with help of villages formed by an immediate existence between dwellings and what are considered central constructions in terms of their rank, or through settlements and towns constituting a nucleus with homes, places of work and central constructions, around which one finds peasant dwellings in a greater or lesser

degree of mediateness, architecture manages to collectively detach itself from architecture-city as a whole. With this objective, it turns to nature, now the principal place for work, and develops in strictly architectural levels of housing until achieving enjoyment of nature in castles or haciendas: both equivalent to house and city in one.

In towns -characterized during the more rural stages by a merger between individual constructions- architecture takes a progressive step in which architectonic dwellings forming the nucleus of the city manage to detach themselves from it. In short, architecture is detached within the same element, as it has done with respect to nature. In turn, the outer distinction originated in immediate preceding stages is maintained in the form of "villas", which are more urban than rural. This is the "public" stage -classical, renaissance,etc.- or architecture "in" the city, a time for consolidation of the work place within the city and for looking toward the street and being seen from it. The street is what links the architectural community and around which the hierarchy of dwellings develops, with urban palaces at the pinnacle."

[6] In mathematical terms of proportion it is possible to calculate that architecture is to the city what the city is to architecture, provided the two elements are adopted as wholes, which would make them indistinct in that relation. By extension, inhabited space is to each inhabitant what he or she is to inhabited space. "Presenting a proportion mathematically can be useful in referring to esthetic situations that are conceived in a broader sense but permanently present in our lives. Such is the case with a proportion implying that "1 is to 2 as 2 is to 4", where each relationship between amounts is known as "ratio" and has one of its representations in the form of a fraction. For our purposes, the two quantities or elements of a ratio where the same as the other, only reversed. Moreover, these elements were not numerical but words that correspond to concepts indicating that:

$$\frac{architecture}{city} = \frac{city}{architecture}$$

This type of proportion would be possible if the two elements were equivalent wholes, but only of different spatial expression. In their different, it is the quality, not the "size" of the whole that is important. The context of these ideas is that of relationships found in space inhabited by man; of culture, of recreation and of design in terms of space; of spatial aspects in what is economic, social and political, and of esthetics viewed as the ideological element of what is spatial."

[7] Working against this teaching objective is the fact that recreation, as mentioned earlier, has accelerated to the point of overshadowing the other two elements of the triad: design and culture. It obscures excesses against culture derived from necessary progress and expressed in economic boasting and social prejudice. Moreover, it has come to adopt a neutral state between recreation and nonrecreation that is reticent to coexistence of the traditional power of time with the new power of space, to continued validity of the dominant on equal footing with the dominated, and to the rights of some intersecting with the obligations of others.

"The struggle involves a model that is very special. Being present in the most instantaneous recreational and even daily actions of an individual, it allows these actions to embody continuous recreation of the world: the dual role of homo ludens."..."There is a global human culture which, not by being identical to each of its parts, ceases to have an identity of its own and the capacity to produce itself with anyone of these individual cultures by becoming congruent with them: just as the smallest triangle is congruent with the largest if their angles are equal."