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TIME AND SPACE: PORTUGUESE ORIGINS IN OSCAR NIEMEYER'S URBAN DECISIONS

TEMPO E ESPAÇO: AS ORIGENS PORTUGUESAS
NAS DECISÕES URBANAS DE OSCAR NIEMEYER

TIEMPO Y ESPACIO: LOS ORÍGENES
PORTUGUESES EN LAS DECISIONES
URBANÍSTICAS DE OSCAR NIEMEYER



Figure 0. Niemeyer and Perret
in Le Havre. Source: Image of
the author.

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RESUMO

O urbanismo no Brasil se apropriou da tradição urbanística na mesma medida em que a arquitetura moderna pioneira? Este artigo constrói uma resposta a este questionamento, que passa pelo desdobramento teórico da definição do termo espaço a partir do reconhecimento de duas concepções historicamente aceitas. Parte da apresentação breve das genealogias e principais aspectos destas concepções, como suporte metodológico para a leitura de seu rebatimento na obra de Oscar Niemeyer; cerca as estratégias projetuais em duas obras do arquiteto, o projeto para a Praça XV no Rio de Janeiro (1991) e para o conjunto urbano de Pena Furada, em Portugal (1965). Com noções emprestadas de outros campos disciplinares, propõe uma interpretação da incorporação do tempo como elemento mediador da experiência espacial: como marco literal – impresso nas referências concretas à tradição - e como elemento gerador das decisões espaciais - ao ser incorporado na experiência do deslocamento.

Palavras-chave: arquitetura moderna brasileira, Oscar Niemeyer; espaços livre e edificado, projeto urbano, estratégias projetuais.

ABSTRACT

Did urbanism in Brazil appropriate the urban tradition to the same extent as pioneering modern architecture? This article builds an answer to this question, which goes through the theoretical unraveling of the definition of the term space from the recognition of two historically accepted conceptions. It starts with a brief presentation of the main genealogies and principles of these conceptions, as methodological support to read their impact on the work of Oscar Niemeyer: It looks at the design strategies used in two works of the architect: the project for Praça XV in Rio de Janeiro (1991) and the urban complex of Pena Furada, in Portugal (1965). With notions borrowed from other disciplinary fields an interpretation of the incorporation of time as a mediating element of spatial experience is proposed: as a literal landmark - printed in concrete references to tradition - and as a generating element of spatial decisions - when incorporated into the experience of displacement.

Keywords: modern brazilian architecture, Oscar Niemeyer; free and built spaces, urban design, design strategies.

RESUMEN

¿Se apropió el urbanismo en Brasil de la tradición urbana en la misma medida que la arquitectura moderna pionera? Este artículo construye una respuesta a esta pregunta, que implica el despliegue teórico de la definición del término espacio a partir del reconocimiento de dos concepciones históricamente aceptadas. Comienza con una breve presentación de las genealogías y principales aspectos de estas concepciones, como soporte metodológico para la lectura de su impacto en la obra de Oscar Niemeyer; rodea las estrategias de diseño en dos obras del arquitecto, el proyecto para la Praça XV en Río de Janeiro (1991) y para el conjunto urbano de Pena Furada, en Portugal (1965). Con nociones tomadas de otros campos disciplinares, se propone una interpretación de la incorporación del tiempo como elemento mediador de la experiencia espacial: como hito literal -impreso en referencias concretas a la tradición- y como elemento generador de decisiones espaciales -al incorporarse a la experiencia del desplazamiento-.

Palabras clave: arquitectura moderna brasileña, Oscar Niemeyer; espacios libres y construidos, diseño urbano, estrategias de proyecto.

INTRODUCTION

The adherence of Brazilian architects to modern lines, guided by the Charter of Athens (CIAM, 1933), and the success of Brasília guaranteed by the theoretical force of Lucio Costa, eclipsed a necessary reflection: has urbanism in Brazil appropriated the urbanistic tradition to the same extent as pioneering modern architecture?

The modern form is born in Brazil, with a position already described in the historical sequence of architectural styles, in a concatenation as logical as accepted by the following generations of architects, who found no arguments – for decades – to question its validity. Modernity was created congenitally (WISNIK, 2004; 2022) in Brazil. It occupied gaps in a developing culture and was embedded in the nationalist imaginary, supported by references to tradition. The purpose of this article is to approach the impact that this had on facing urban issues, using the work of Oscar Niemeyer.

Niemeyer's first projects materialized Lucio Costa's conciliatory equation, by connecting the teachings of Central European modern architecture to the Portuguese colonial tradition. This condition is explicit in the material decisions of buildings, with the exploitation of symbolic references: tiles, shading elements, and balconies. The question that arises is the following: is there also, in the urban space forged by his projects, evidence of specific contamination by the Portuguese colonial tradition?

The answer undergoes a theoretical unraveling of the definition of the term, space, from the recognition of two historically accepted conceptions. Part of the brief presentation of the genealogies and main aspects of these conceptions, as methodological support for the reading of their rebuttal in the work of Oscar Niemeyer, surrounds the design strategies in two works by the architect, the project for Praça XV square in Rio de Janeiro (1991), and for the Pena Furada urban complex in Portugal (1965).

Finally, the article will discuss the inclusion of a third conception of space, which absorbs the notion of time as a mediating factor; borrowing concepts from physics to clarify the approximation between the spatial procedures of Niemeyer's work with aspects of the Portuguese urbanistic tradition.

METHODOLOGY

TWO CONCEPTIONS OF SPACE

The conceptualization of space is the subject of a perennial discussion about the history of philosophy and science. Until recently, the defenders of the Aristotelian vision, which considers space between bodies, and those attached to the vision consecrated by Newton, who formulates a model of the universe where emptiness is understood as support for bodies, regardless of their existence, were antagonists.

These two concepts of space can be contrasted with the following: (a) space as positional quality of the world of material objects; (b) space as container of all material objects. In case (a), space without a material object is inconceivable. In case (b), a material object can only be conceived as existing in space; space then appears as a reality which in a certain sense is superior to the material world. (Einstein, 2010, p. 17)

The first conception is structured in antiquity and derives from the interpretation of what is not an object, but rather the result of the association between them: "Space is the immovable limit that embraces a body" (Aristotle, cited by Abagnanno, 2007, p.349). The existence of space is conditioned to the elements that contain its limits. It makes no sense, in this equation, to imagine empty space, independent of the presence of other bodies. Space is understood as a place, a slice determined and defined by a positional condition. The association with the unoccupied voids of traditional cities seems appropriate. A crossing or a square, in this scheme, is defined by the boundaries of the objects that guarantee their existence. Any change in the object interferes with the composition of the created space.

The second conception is born with telescopes when the observation of space allows their description as a container that holds material objects. The understanding gives space, an absolute condition, independent of the objects contained in it and without any possibility of containment. The causal disengagement between body and space is embodied in the discourse of modern urbanism in its essence. The rhetoric of machinist functionalism demanded that buildings be disconnected from their urban matrices and that they lose, therefore, their main role as conformers of the empty city space. Once the correlation is made, the city is understood as a continuous free space, and the utopia of the city park is consolidated as the maximum objective of functional urbanism (Rowe; Koeter, 1983).

The break with the notion of corridor street, fought by Le Corbusier, and the inseparable nature of the building and free space, frays the static limits of space, allowing the multiplication of understandings about displacement and experimentation related to the transitions between exterior and interior. The facades, until then limiting elements of the public experience, lose their mediating function. The buildings, free, can explore alternative relationships with the city, and, above all, can be understood as autonomous structures. "Modern man is, above all, a mobile human being" (Sennet, 2008, p.261).

Niemeyer works, in some way, with the reconciliation – with greater or lesser complexity – of these two conceptions. Perhaps the most correct thing is to state that there are projects where modern linkage takes its toll in a more evident way, where the understanding of space subjugates it to the condition of inert support and little participation in the use scenarios. We continue to explore these conceptions in two works by the architect highlighted here because his urban intentions make explicit the proposed methodological argumentation.

RESULTS

FREE SPACE IN TWO WORKS BY OSCAR NIEMEYER

Praça XV

1° de Março and 7 de Setembro streets. On one corner was the sober whitewashed Old Convent of Carmo, on the other, the Metropolitan Cathedral, dark, heavy, of no interest to me. And I was considering why they didn't paint it white, linking it by color to the convent and the Palace. White has always been the color of all buildings of the colonial period. [...]

In the Square, to give it the indispensable architectural unity and a livelier and more attractive environment, he would start by hiding the existing buildings, building two blocks of apartments in front of them, with five floors and shops on the ground floor; foreseeing between them, the necessary space so that the Telles Arch was visible and accessible. The two blocks followed the architectural spirit of the building built to house the Telles Arch: simple, with small openings, painted white, giving the shops a purpose [...]. The cathedral would be painted white and the station and jetties diverted away from the Stock Exchange building, leaving that area connected with the sea. [...]

But the Square was still too large and as I would like to see it on a fairer scale, stripped of vegetation, highlighting the Imperial Palace, I transferred the trees in it to the area between the viaduct and the sea, it seemed to me the fairest solution, making it smaller, more sober, and this sector more welcoming, all wooded, with bars and outdoor tables.

It remained to study the area between Albamar and Estação das barcas and the desire to create the free spaces that this city claims, in it I only put a hotel, a shopping mall, and a block with three cinemas. For this, as I already predicted, it would invade the sea where I designed a theater, an exhibition and handicraft block, an underwater aquarium, and a restaurant. (Niemeyer, 1991)

In this project, Niemeyer juxtaposes the two conceptions of space and appropriates each of them as a response to the urban particularity faced.

In the first case, when facing the existing city - in a traditional way - he proposes a negotiation between building and free space, an interdependence that mediates the co-existence of both, a "*fair scale*" to highlight the Imperial Palace, with the appropriate dimensions to ensure the prominence of the historic building. The concern progresses with forming a continuous ambiance, standardizing the buildings, painting them white, "*as with all buildings of the colonial period*", and building two new blocks, with the same height and "*character*" as the original ensemble (Palace and Church). The construction of the free space is three-dimensional and depends on the precision of the containment elements. The suggested removal of the trees shows the need to visually share the buildings with the squares' users, under penalty of not completing the formative equation of the free space (Figure 1 and Figure 2).



Figure 1. Praça XV: the historical setting.
Source: Oscar Niemeyer Foundation.

Figure 2. Praça XV: the modern park.
Source: Oscar Niemeyer Foundation.

The second case presents the opposite situation, the lack of contours, which results in an inseparable reading of the space created with the landscape. If in the stretch of the traditional city, the monumentality of the complex is materialized in the free space, the element that is worth the creative effort here, with the city being created, the protagonism is clearly linked to the building-object that starts to compose the highlighted landscape.

Niemeyer suggests a distinct nature on the other side of the viaduct (existing at that time), reaffirming this even programmatic duality. The surface, without clear boundaries, merges with the sea (even advances on it) offering support for the myriad of autonomous buildings that are not constrained by the creation of enclosures or shaped shelters. This function is served by the vegetation, transplanted from the Square. The effectiveness of this argument must be questioned. It seems more appropriate to put faith in the buildings themselves as promoters of shelter, as a protected exception in the landscape's openness.

Edson Mahfuz (2002), paraphrasing Colin Rowe and Fred Koeter (1983), associates this double reading, which contrasts the traditional and modern city, to the condition of the two main spatial references of the Mediterranean tradition, the forum and the Acropolis. The argument is that for the Romans the void, the symbolic referential stage of the cities, is the urban objective itself, guaranteed by the existence of the buildings of power around it. Meanwhile, for the Greeks, the representation focuses on the image of the temple, set on a platform that plays a supporting role.

Reinforcing the methodological argument of this article, the author associates with the forum model, a conception of space of Aristotelian origin, which links its definition to the existence of objects that contain it and, consequently, to the typical characterization of traditional cities, where squares and their variants emerged as an exception to the built massif of the blocks. On the other hand, he indicates the affiliation of the notion of the Acropolis to a conception of absolute space, independent of external elements, as support for autonomous objects that do not participate in its existence. Thus, he describes the modern combative posture.

Pena Furada

In the 1965 proposal for the Pena Furada coastal development in the Algarve (Portugal), the only urban project developed by Niemeyer in Portugal, the ancestral impulses break with the modern superego, explaining a literal approach to Portuguese urban references.

The project was presented in a notebook containing an illustrated version of the descriptive report, as well as a model elaborated with the summary of the proposal (CABRAL, 2018). The document describes a script of the project, built as a logic of approach to the proposed center. The route along the main road structure is linearly exposed, with the description and illustration of the sequence of proposed spatial situations, in a planned cinematographic storyboard (Figure 3).

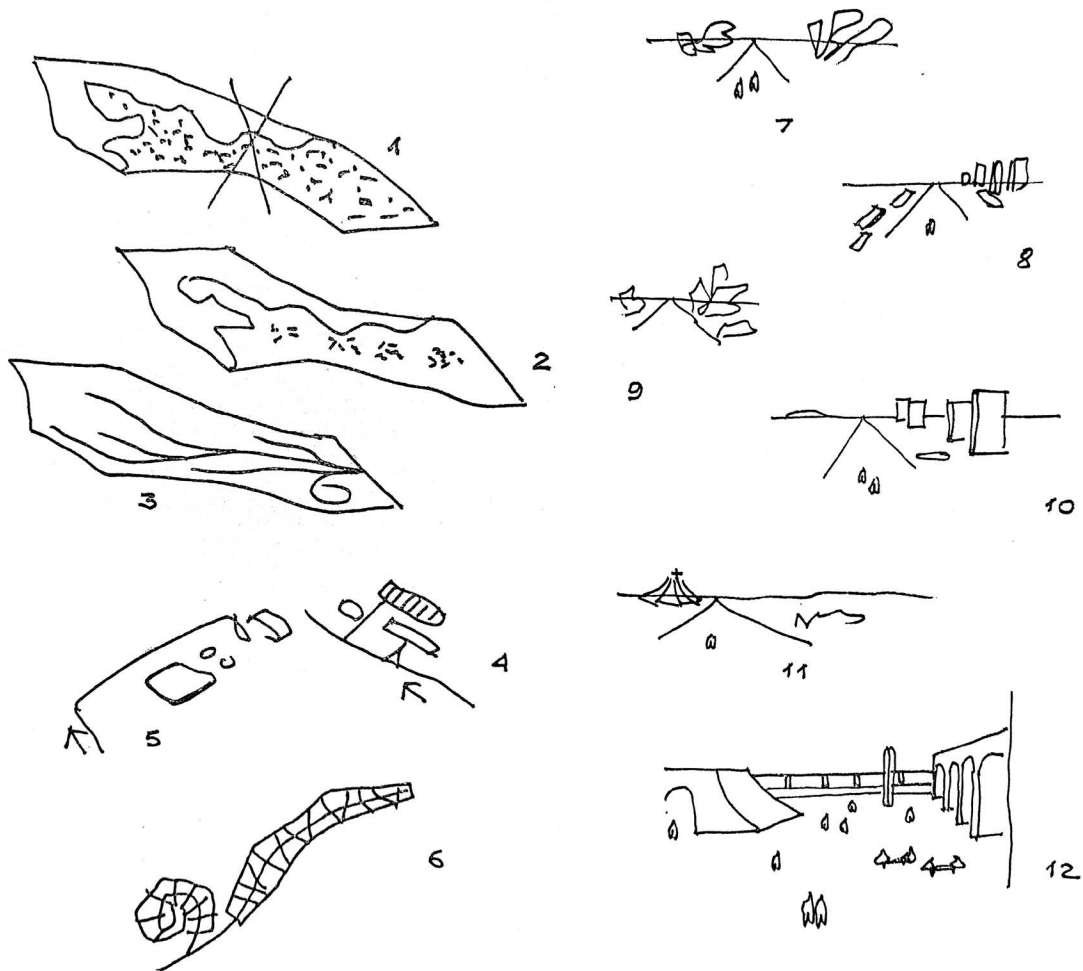


Figure 3. Pena Furada Urban Complex (Algarve, Portugal, 1965). Sketch. Source: Oscar Niemeyer Foundation.

Scene by scene, displacement is designed and justified by the succession of uses and, above all, spatial experiences controlled by the architect's hand. Prominent elements emerge and are hidden. The natural landscape takes its leading role by being kept intact in the vast portions of unoccupied territory, formatting rhythmic intervals between the buildings.

Opportunely, buildings are built in front of the access road, signaling the concentration of the residential sector. Fifteen-story towers also approach the road, informing about another one, at a greater distance. The villages of individual houses are removed from the structure, creating hubs agglutinated by independent formal logics, but linked to the topographic reality of the site. At the end of the route, almost at its meeting with the sea, a forty-story hotel lighthouse tower raises the prominent vertical reference, building the unavoidable communication with the route's users and more broadly with the landscape.

I transcribe the project report, which guides the construction of the arguments:

A main road cuts the land towards the sea, and from it, the secondary roads depart that serve the different sectors. For those arriving at the site, the first building that appears is the administration building [...]. Then, on the right, the first street appears, indicating the supply area, market, and airport [...].

A little further on, on the left, a second street appears that leads to the next two lots, provided like the others with local commerce, "playground" etc.

It continues, then, [...] with free and wooded space and later, the first set of collective housing. There are 4- and 15-story buildings that line the road. It is a moment of surprise for visitors as if a small modern and civilized city was approaching, but as soon as they pass by, the fields reappear, the amazing nature that the project seeks to preserve. [...]

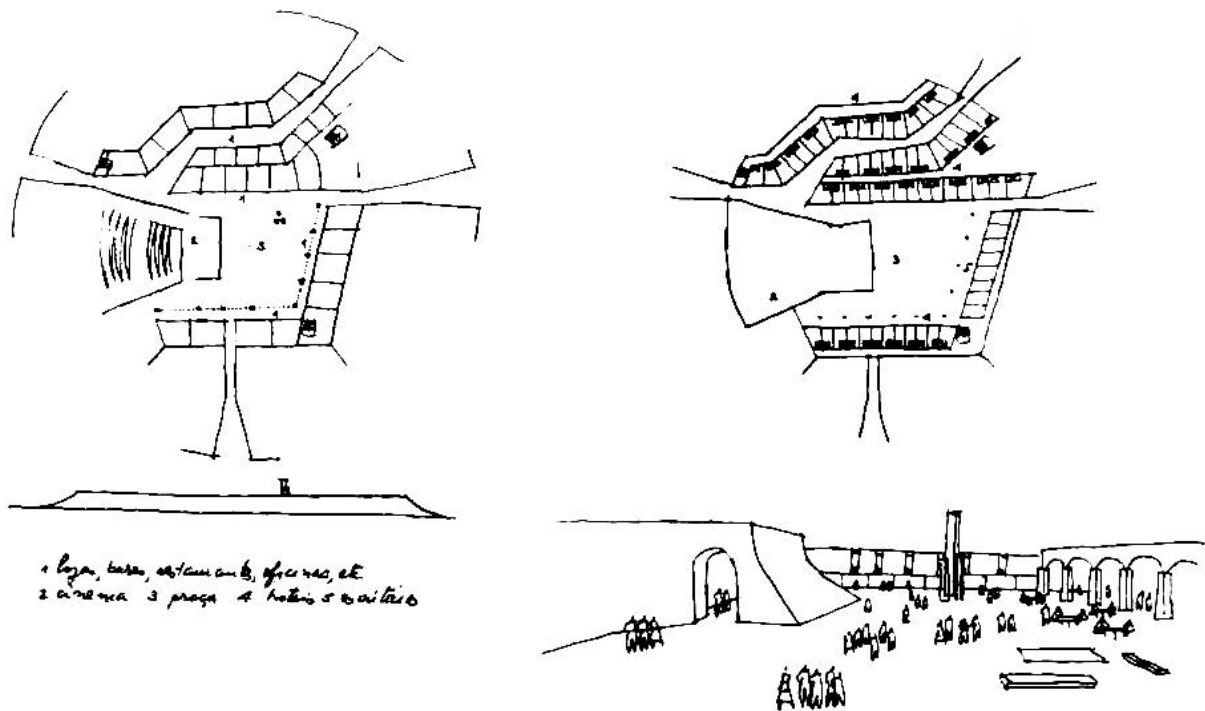
The free spaces appear again and soon after, among the vegetation, the hexagonal chapel, whitewashed in the best Portuguese tradition; the primary school and, on the other side of the road, the shops.

Then you should go down and enter the small ensemble. Through the narrow alleys, open on the slope, visitors penetrate, curious, into the construction, hoping to find the modern solutions they left behind. And they are surprised to see the small rustic, almost provincial, square with simple buildings that surround it, where shops, restaurants, bars, etc. are located. It is a bit of the old Portugal that, without copying it, we intend to fix. It is a protected and quiet place, for meetings and indispensable contact. (Niemeyer, 1966)

The report lays bare the cinematic intentions of the project. The user is in motion, transitioning between the portions of intact nature and the constructed ensembles revealed and overcome as they move through them. The Portuguese occupation tradition guides the reasoning, even if implicitly. Landmarks define the high points, ordinary buildings accompany the path between them, and the generic and residential city adapts, sinuously, to the topography.

But the reference becomes literal in the construction of the shopping center: Attentive to the discussion about the heart of the city (VIII CIAM, Otterlo, 1951), the project recreates parameters of an "ancient Portugal", a "rustic square", where the infinite modern surface is replaced by a space controlled by "simple buildings", "a protected and quiet place, for indispensable meetings and contact".

The architectural proposal of this complex, although little detailed in the available material, is unquestionably innovative, and reverberates a trend that would be established as an important investigative axis of Brazilian architecture, especially that of São Paulo, the manipulation of the land as a conforming element of space. It approaches, for example, the experiences of Vilanova Artigas in the Santa Paula Boathouse (São Paulo, 1961), and Paulo Mendes da Rocha, in the Brazilian Pavilion for Expo 70 (Osaka, 1969). Three accomplices in overcoming rigidity in the definitions of floor and building masonry and structure. If the European modern architecture of the 1930s broke down the boundaries between interior and exterior, the Brazilians, in the 1960s, undid the distinction between object and support, converting it into a single floor and building entity.



1 loja, teatro, estacionamento, oficinas, etc
2 academia 3 praça 4 teatro 5 biblioteca

The Pena Furada shopping center is the result of a deliberately irregular geometry excavated on an artificial slope, forcing the surprise effect, where the Baroque counterpoint revealed civic free space to those who only saw the landscape, from the road. The feature of controlled access, along ramps or tunnels that accentuate the experience of the passerby, gains a topological version here, with the landscape being sculpted to favor the architectural experience. It is the materialization of the description made by Sophia Telles about the pure geometry buildings of the architect: "They are forms that do not create space, but condense all space within and, like geometric figures, have neither exterior nor interior" (Telles, 1988, p.79).

The reference to "old Portugal" frees the design from its monumental demands, guiding the project through concrete space explorations, maintained by the "simple" buildings that define them. The prominent element of the square's organization is a cinema, the most abstract and referential volume of the proposed void, the convergent end of the four proposed access alleys: the significant symbolic reference. The building is not isolated but is incorporated into the geometry of the blocks excavated on the slope. The other faces of buildings facing the square are taken by shops and two of them receive a typical shading treatment of Italian *loggias* or French *palisades*, reaffirming the commitment to the protection assumed by the report. The Portuguese reference is extended to the Mediterranean tradition, in an almost literal quotation to the designs of Italian and French squares, with their churches incorporated into the blocks without greater effects of monumentalization than those guaranteed by the very contra-position in turn guaranteed by the free space in front of it, with streets that do not directly reach the square, allowing the continuity of the facades that define the void (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Shopping center, Pena Furada Urban Complex (Algarve, Portugal, 1965). Source: Oscar Niemeyer Foundation.

DISCUSSION

The projects described make two opposing urban spatial matrices coexist. Different spatial intentions (and notions) unfold, mediating between the modern sectorized and organized city, to offer itself as neutral support for buildings, and the recreated space in the mold of the traditional city, with its emptiness linked to the existence of physical boundaries.

Niemeyer understands the complementarity of these two situations and triggers the time to sew together the equation. Appropriate time in two ways: in the discursive reference to its passage, concretized in actions of deference to tradition, and in physical experimentation, translated as displacement. If in Rio de Janeiro the crossing of the viaduct defines the transition, in Pena Furada, the route allows the sequenced overlap of visual experiences (along the access intersection), either by the narrowness of the path through the alleyways, offset by the next moment of relief in the unexpected square.

I propose a disciplinary digression to argue in favor of an approximation of Niemeyer with what is presented as a third category of the conception of space, dependent on the inclusion of a third and defining factor: time, precisely the fourth variable of space suggested by Einstein. In the two original conceptions of space (Aristotle and Newton) the presence of the object is the key to the definition. In the mediation proposed by Einstein, it is replaced by the idea of the *event*, as it is detected also within a time sequence. The notion of the field arises, which is the association of these four variables and the realization that events must always be examined considering other verification systems.

The two concepts of space are free creations of the human imagination, resources designed to facilitate the understanding of our sensory experience. These schematic considerations consider the nature of space from the geometric and kinematic points of view, respectively. (Einstein, 2010, p. 18)

Geometry and kinematics, or rest and movement, are presented as complementary stages of human experience. Space necessarily has a four-dimensional experimentation and it is the role of architecture to work with this. However, movement supposes a certain acceptance of the absolute condition of space, understood as a fixed element and alien to the alteration of the bodies that are in it, and, at the same time, as support for this to happen, from the recognition of the multiplicity of potential experiences (Allen, 2008).

The implementation of the cinema as the central element of the Pena Furada Square should be taken as a metaphor: Einsteinian overcoming of the theoretical conflict between absolute (modern) and conditioned (pre-modern) space.

At this point, we can outline the answer to the question imposed at the beginning of the text: it is an urban procedure of Portuguese origin. To reinforce the argument, I resort to a project far from the context of this work, but close to its cultural consanguinity. This is the project for the Memorial Tower



Figure 5. Casa dos 24, Porto (Portugal): approach to the church. Source: Image of the author.

Figure 6. Casa dos 24, Porto (Portugal): Alta da Sé square. Source: Image of the author.



of Porto Cathedral, an intervention made between 1998 and 2002 by the architect Fernando Távora (2004), a Master and key theoretical reference for the consolidation of the modern movement in Portugal.

A small tower was erected over the ruins of Casa dos 24, the original administrative seat for the city of Porto. Távora reoccupies the place deconfigured by successive interventions, attentive to the urban events that shaped the site. He rebuilds by intervening in the landmark that visually defined the path to the Cathedral: arranged in a non-orthogonal way to the church. The building serves as a scalar reference to the main monument. It indicates a gradual approach and provides tangential, never axial, observations of the whole (Figure 5 and Figure 6).

The Portuguese urban tradition associates paths with their symbolic landmarks. The street nomenclature itself indicates what one should look at. The image of the city is built in motion, from the succession of fragments of the building reached in its normally sinuous approach.

Let us return to the Brazilian to narrow down the approach. In the project for the House of Culture of Le Havre (1972), Niemeyer reproduces the procedure of his Portuguese colleague.

When I started the Le Havre project, I thought that architecture was linked to a whole, to the climate, and I didn't want a square where people looked at the elements from a single point of view. There, I always wanted to find a solution that would protect the square from this wind. By placing it on a lower level, it could also be seen from above. In this way, it gave other dimensions to its life and architectural space. (Niemeyer, cited by Petit, 1988, p. 43)

The great symbolic building (theater) is only a noticeable protagonist at a certain distance, conquered by the remoteness of an urban dimension. The approach to the square of coexistence, intended for daily use, requires a tangential path to the theater, abstracted as a mere conditioner of the gaze during the journey. The descent of the ramp is, as in the climb to Sé do Porto, gradual and choreographed. Along the route, there are no complete exhibitions of the symbolic building, only occasional news. The reveal only takes place only at the end of the route, in an enclosure that expands, reaffirming the contrast with the promenade within it¹.

Like the Tower of Tavora, the second block of Le Havre's multipurpose room is sacrificed as a regulating element of scale, correcting the perception of the complex by giving new proportion to the space created and establishing a visual reference (of a template, in this case) with the consolidated environment. Niemeyer offers a new point of view and experimentation of the city designed a few decades before by August Perret (Figure 7 and Figure 8).

¹ A renovation in a 2015 project of the Architectural offices of Deshoulières Jeanneau and Sogno, removed the access system described by these comments.

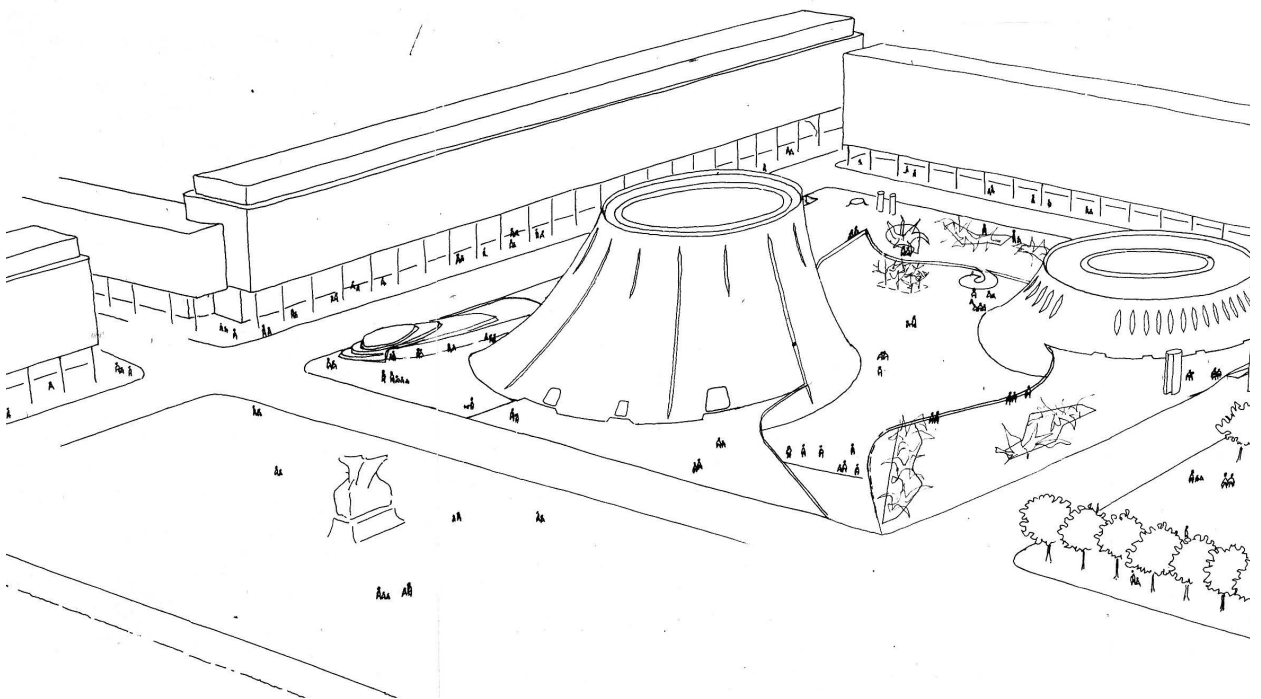


Figure 7. Niemeyer and Perret in Le Havre.
Source: Image of the author.

Figure 8. Niemeyer and Perret in Le Havre.
Source: Oscar Niemeyer Foundation.

The act of lowering the square, associated with the implementation of the scalar secondary block and the choreographed and contained accesses, manipulates the condition of the surroundings making it serve, by contrast, the monumentalization of the theater building. Sophia Telles recalls that

[...] Niemeyer's form, on one hand, is far from the modern technique that one wants to be evident, and on the other, his imagination wants to be free of all contingency. They are forms that are so natural that it is only up to them to contemplate. (Telles, 1988, p. 83)

The volume of the theater, not because of its referent geometry, but because of the engendering of the site's urban conditions, becomes a landscape: left to contemplation. It eventually earned the nickname volcano. There is an effort to create the desired protagonism, so that the abstract volumetric object gains a neutral existence, with autonomy from the urban fabric. But there is also the construction of a contrary process to this condition, which, in a baroque negotiation, directs the user in a sinuous approach, with controlled visual parceling, before the final reveal. The building is landscape only if seen from afar. Whoever approaches it must pay the penance of the approach so that there is no doubt of its sacralization.

The link between the free space and the symbolic building is part of the Portuguese urban tradition, most often with a church. The existence of the square (spacious churchyard or yard) was linked to a building of public significance and was established as an exceptional element in the occupation of the city and, therefore, as an announcement of the presence of an urban landmark.

This relationship establishes a double construction process of monumentality, associated with the two scales of understanding of the building and the free space that accompanies it. Forum and Acropolis in the same operation. On the one hand, the churches are arranged in such a way as to be seen from a distance, affirming the prominence of their symbolic role. This requires distancing and they end up integrating into the landscape, as can be seen in Brazilian cities with the colonial fabric still maintained. On the other hand, church squares widen the local horizon and allow an approximate view of the object, offering themselves as a support to its integral presence, close to the concrete experience of visitors. In both processes, the result is the neutralization of the built urban mass, converted into a landscape by the distance, which blurs the reading of the individual pieces, or by the free space, which enhances the presence of the singular building.

CONCLUSIONS

The experimentation of space mediated by time is not new. Le Corbusier, to use a close reference, incorporates displacement as an

organizational motivation. The notion of walking (*promenade*) is presented as a manifesto in the project of the Ville Savoye (Poissy, France, 1928-29), where the spaces succeed each other in a vertical path, organized by a series of circulation elements, notably a ramp, protagonist of the complex, which culminates in a roof terrace.

The celebration of movement becomes an Einsteinian field, where the four variables of Space-Time, act for the individual experiences. The building is experienced in multiple ways, choreographed, however, by architecture.

In Niemeyer, the *promenade* repeats the logic of vertical movement but adds an element. The building offers itself as a landscape, making the route an excuse for the multiple and sequenced observation of that object.

The predominant movement is that of approaching the building, either by manipulating the terrain, with the multiplication of public levels and indications of access controls, or by adopting complementary elements to support the displacement, explicitly designed to amplify the intention. The solution of a ramp that prolongs vertical access or an internal connection between floors of a building is recurrent, constantly changing direction before taking the user to their destination.

There is no way to enter the Museum of Contemporary Art of Niterói (1991) without first seeing it from different points of view. Going down to the square of the House of Culture of Le Havre (1972) means leisurely passing by the theater building, while entering the Cathedral of Brasília (1958) forces the user to submit to narrowness and darkness before being rewarded with light and spaciousness.

We come to the point, the observation of an architectural object repeated, at different angles, along a route is, in essence, a Portuguese urbanistic habit. The implementation of symbolic buildings in cities of Portuguese origin respects an organization linked to the topography, taking hilltops as prominent elements in the landscape. Between the churches, outlined there, the main streets appear; responsible for communication between the parishes. Their designs respected the requirements of the terrain, making them, most of the time, sinuous, to offer their users intermittent views of the churches, as departure and arrival landmarks (Teixeira, 2012).

Niemeyer reaffirms his link to the myth of the origin of Brazilian modern architecture, the contribution to the traditional matrix as a validating historiographic element, but shifts this condition to the field of urbanism, tracing a path towards abstraction similar to that traveled by his architecture. Until Brasília, his architecture carried literal references to colonial materiality, from there, it starts from a volumetric synthesis that

spatially incorporates the references, making them an inseparable part of the formal equation. It is not risky to state that the same occurs in his urban action.

Time, a mediator of experience, is initially taken as a literal landmark, imprinted in concrete references to tradition, and gradually becomes a generating element of spatial decisions by being incorporated into the experience of movement.

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