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ARTISTIC-TOTALITY AND POSITION OF THE INDUSTRIAL
ARTS AND CRAFTSMANSHIP IN THE NEW CITY

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The New City is a city built from top to bottom, as a whole, for the benefit of mankind. In this city the industrial arts are called upon to perform a primordial function that will be examined by the general reporting officer for this subject, Mr. Gillo Dorfles. Depending on the extension of the concept and the importance of the function of industrial design, we may succeed in determining the possible function of craftsmanship, in a city of this type, which tends to close its doors to ill-adapted manpower or workers that are unsuitable for an epoch that is just beginning for the installation and environmental equipment of man.

In Brasília, an example of a new city, there are partial indications that the architects' control is tending to spread, at any rate initially, to this equipment. In Lucio Costa's covering note to the pilot plan of the city, a suitable comfortable "habitat" is recommended for all the inhabitants and even a special type of cemetery (the English one), with the object of preventing a repetition of the bad taste found in so many countries.

It is generally known that hundreds of apartments, at the beginning are to be furnished by the Work Group entrusted with the transfer of the federal services. I mention this fact, not to affirm that this commission will furnish them well, but only to indicate an existing trend - also imposed by the urgency due to the political conditions under which Brazil was born - towards group solutions for equipment, obviously providing an opportunity for improving the collective standards of taste and material civilization in the country, starting by the future capital. The case in point of the first telephone book of the city, planned by architect A. Licio Pontual, is symptomatic.

It is true that interferences of expressions of reality that can be pointed out in relation to the town-planning projects themselves, also occur in this particular case, opening the gate to multiple human variations. Now on the point of starting out, it is not the Architecture department of NOVACAP, but the DASP (a government department for controlling the civil service) which is seeing to the equipment referred to above.

There are clearly many human limitations, or political ones, to this global or guiding tendency, which is steering very close to totalitarianism, or so it seems.

But our epoch can rely on a new weapon: audio-visual or intense visual communication, alongside of the new pedagogic techniques to influence group opinion, guiding tendencies of taste, but avoiding as far as possible the psychological shocks that result from brutal or inadequate impositions.

Taking Brasília as an example, to however great an extent town-planning and artistic-totality are eventually closed therein, for some years, keeping the city at a higher level than the reality in Brazil (unfortunately in watertight compartments, for various purposes positive or negative including one which may be considered the best: that of creating a prototype) and leading to a maximum extent to the application of certain notions similar to zoning. This last type of intervention is today being developed today in liberal countries like the United States. In planning

they sometimes go as far as brutally to close the town to the inflow of strangers, in the best of solutions controlling the population by creating satellite cities.

In the case of Brasilia, in its present stage of construction, barriers have already been raised against immigrants seeking work, and for some time people are only allowed to enter the region by land if they have a personal affidavit (carta de chamada), which guarantees their support, or a labour contract. It is true that these barriers work and have worked inefficiently, but the mere fact that they exist shows a new city must face the depressing prospect of becoming not so much an example as an aristocratic kyst, produced by a hierarchic society or one divided into rich and poor and threatened with being rapidly submerged beneath the real conditions of the country.

This state of affairs may be taken as yet another argument in favour of extending the planning not only from the urbs to the region, but to the nation as a whole. The planning should cover the whole country.

Attacking the problem of the New City in its global aspect, as a prototype only, the writer proposes to analyse the problem of industrial design and subsequently the position of craftsmanship, its functions, or even the feasibility of its existence or utilization.

A working hypothesis is that in the new city there can only exist an equipment that is new in conception, realization and function. The city planners must look to this, supplying the guiding lines (comparable to the axes of river basins) for the purpose. Theoretically, man could only live in perfect aesthetic conditions if everything surrounding him were aesthetically adequate and just. No statistics, however, are available for this extremely mobile situation, which is complex and in continual self-transformation; as a consequence of successive conditional or interferential mutations, a certain flexibility, both real and organic, becomes necessary.

Besides, the products of craftsmanship or of the past, by their beauty and their relationships of meaning, can create factors for enriching the life of man, that cannot be ignored in modern totality. They should be submitted, however, to a criterion of adequacy that would define their position accurately within the environmental dynamism that surrounds man.

As for craftsmanship, I believe it will be able to survive in a new city, but in a special way. Within certain limits, it will exist as a kind of "sporting" production (by its character of exercise or amateur dilettantism), creating activities and forms that avoid standardizing man, which is the great danger of the whole industrial epoch.

In general, however, the products of craftsmanship will be imported from other regions, with compensatory equipment with regard to the mastery of technique. It will take a share in a social-figurative (or social-visual) mechanism striking a balance between nature and technics.

Already in the Congress of Art Critics held in Naples and Palermo, I had the opportunity of referring at length to the great role that the industrial arts will play as an element in the daily and any space and time in the generalization of forms created by the so-called modern arts, whose birth may sometimes be shared on the architectural side and, together, the plastic arts become more evident. Along its functional contents, practically and immediately accessible, supply it with the means of making the general public understand them and assimilate them directly, by living with them.