



LAURA A. DIMA

PREAMBLE

I chose to talk about Utopia because I find it a subject constantly transforming, taking shape according to different moments in history.

Talking about now, we live in such unpredictable age that we might imagine everything is possible. But what exactly is that *everything*? This is the question that pushed me into researching Utopian thinking throughout history and asks myself the same question.

I reflected on how people imagined Utopias and what it said about their own wishes and dissatisfactions with their contemporary society. However, you might ask yourself why me, stud-

ying architectural design decided to approach this subject. It is not as far from my own practice as you might think. It all starts in the moment you get an assignment. The part of the process is to do research, restricted to your field and the context of the given assignment of course. But what if I could conduct a research that will include everything, a socio-political economic study about ourselves, about the people and about our world?

How do we see each other in relation to the city?

Is it in our power to change anything?

What should we change then if we did have the power?

These are the questions that pop up all the time in my practice.

To imagine a Utopia is a challenging and very complex issue. It's not only about dreaming about a perfect world but also about planning a working system that might create a perfect society. Is that even possible?

Various people from different disciplines came close to it in theory.

But while others were trying to implement the theory, the results were rather disastrous.

When did these implemented Utopian ideas failed to work and why?

I might say we can go two ways: Utopia is meant to be only a beautiful written text, a concept. What is important to understand is that it is an individual vision produced by only one mind at work and when one person tries to force his Utopia upon a big group of people it can't be avoided that his Utopia will turn into the other's Dystopia.

Nevertheless, Utopia does play an important role and many thinkers have used it as a tool to criticize or to reflect upon issues that were bothering them. That is why; I find it relevant to take a look at past Utopias. That is my intention for the first chapter. In a sketchy way I shall present a few Utopias that stood out and represented a model of memorable movements and ideas.

I don't plan to praise or despise any of them because that it is not going to bring me anywhere. I would rather keep it as a treasure of knowledge, which might later be of use in the next chapters. It is the first part of my research that will help me understand the subject better, to find guidelines and examples of how others have imagine their own Utopia in order to bring me further with my own.

Getting bored with the systematical and ordered visions of these Utopian ideas I jumped away from it and I *rebelled*. I study the Situationism because their *city of leisure* excited my imagination and thought it might match my own views.

However, it wasn't enough. I wonder how far can people go? I have seen extremely ordered views of perfect societies, pattern repeating itself until the 20th century.

But what if we eliminate order and imagine a perfect society with no restrictions at all? There, we can take a look at anarchist movements

and their revolution against political systems and power.

Everything others had created in order to establish order and well being, anarchists claimed was wrong. People should be free to live their own lives as they please. Laws only repress human beings limiting their horizons and making them slaves to a system somebody else created. But on the other side, is this freedom what people really need and want?

After traveling into all these different lands, I decided working on my own. I chose six people from my own circle to help me through this journey. It is very important they come from an artistic background (graphic design, music, performance, poetry, curatorship, etc.) and they are responsible for representing the new ministries in my new Utopia. People coming from an artistic background should rule an Ideal society because they are the ones that don't fear. They are in search of harmony and are trained in communicating values.

The starting point of our first conference is to decide the pillars we shall build our world on and these pillars I called them values. Each ministry will have one important value to take care of.

CHAPTER I

ORDER

Nowadays the concept the Utopia is very confusing because there have been a lot of alternatives given to the initial meaning throughout history.

Generally, it can be said that Utopia refers to an ideal society.

The word “Utopia” is derived from the Greek language meaning no-man’s land. In early modern Eng-

lish Utopia was spelled “Utopie”, which is today rendered Utopy in some editions.

The different concepts of Utopia can be grouped in four categories according to Belgian philosopher Lieven de Cauter.¹ These are listed as such: a literary genre that describes an ideal society (Thomas Moore “Utopia”, Ernst Callenbach “Ecotopia”²); limited social experiment, a commune (Charles Fourier, Etienne Cabet); a disastrous, large scale social experiment (Hitler, Stalin) and an unspecified, irrepressible, yearning for justice, fulfillment or redemption. Sir Thomas More³ first

used the term “Utopia” in this context in his novel with the same name, published in 1516 in Latin.

The novel
portraits the ideal
organization of
a fictional island
with its political,
religious and
social customs.

It included concepts close to what was later called socialism and communism, such as the elimination of private property, communal living, eradication of unemployment and free health care. However they were mentioned in a more simplistic way and with a satirical tone. More’s intention was to criticize his contemporary society and not to create new politics.

Although Sir Thomas More was the first one to use the word “Utopia” when referring to desirable perfect societies, other thinkers before him had this topic in discussion

1.Lieven de Cauter, The Capsular Civilization. On the City in the Age of Fear. p. 175

2.Ecotopia: The Notebooks and Reports of William Weston is a seminal utopian novel by Ernest Callenbach, published in 1975. The society described in the book is one of the first ecological utopias and was influential on the counterculture and the green movement in the 1970s and thereafter. The author himself claimed that the society he depicted in the book is not a true utopia (in the sense of a perfect society), but, while guided by societal intentions and values, was imperfect and in-process

3.Sir Thomas More was an English lawyer, social philosopher, author, statesman and noted Renaissance humanist. He was also a counselor to Henry VIII, and Lord Chancellor from October 1529 to 16 May 1532



Fig.1 Illustration for the 1516 first edition of Utopia.

dating back to ancient Greece. For example, the most influential one to mention is “The Republic”, a Socratic Dialogue written by Plato and published around 380 BC. Politics is the main focus in the conversations of the characters. It revolves around the meaning of justice in relation with the happiness or unhappiness of the just man and it culminates in imagining a new world based on these ideas.

Their key to the perfect society is that not everybody is fit to rule and that is why there should only be philosopher-kings. During a fifty year long program they would educate the rest of the society which is strictly organized in *golden, silver, bronze* and *iron* socioeconomic classes.

Plato’s ideas were in conflict with its contemporary society as much as Thomas More’s Utopia contrasts the contentious social life of the middle ages with the perfectly orderly, reasonable social arrangements. In Utopia, there are no lawyers because

of the law's simplicity and because social gatherings are in public view (encouraging participants to be transparent), communal ownership supplants private property, men and women are educated alike, and there is almost complete religious toleration. One highly influential interpretation of Utopia is that of Quentin Skinner.⁴ He has argued that More was taking part in the Renaissance humanist debate over true nobility, and that he was writing to prove the perfect commonwealth could not occur with private property. Crucially, his narrator Hythlodæus embodies the Platonic view that philosophers should not get involved in politics and his character of More has the more pragmatic Ciceronic view; thus the society Hythlodæus proposes is the ideal More would want. Utopia is thus More's ideal, but an unobtainable one, explaining why there are such inconsistencies between the

4. Pagden. *The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe*. pp. 123–157.

ideas in Utopia and More's practice in the real world.

Charles Fourier (7 April 1772–10 October 1837), French philosopher and early socialist thinker, is best known for his writings on a new world order based on unity of action and harmonious collaboration. From the architectural point of view he saw this cooperation occurring in communities or *phalanxes*, based around four-level apartment complexes called *Phalansteres* or *grand hotels*.

Poverty was considered to be the root of disorder and should be eliminated.

Wealth was determined by one's job, which was assigned based on the interests and desires of each individual.

He was against *civilization* because it

involved restrain
and always used
the term in a
pejorative manner.

Fourier insists that this transformation requires a complete change in the social institutions: distribution of the social product according to need, assignment of functions according to individual faculties and inclinations, constant mutation of functions, short work periods, and so on. But the possibility of *attractive labor* (*travail attrayant*) derives above all from the release of libidinal forces. Fourier assumes the existence of an attraction industrielle which makes for pleasurable co-operation. It is based on the attraction passionnée in the nature of man, which persists despite the opposition of reason, duty, prejudice.

This attraction passionnée tends toward three principal objectives: the creation of "luxury, or the pleasure



Fig.2 Perspective view of Fourier's Phalanstère

of the five senses”⁵; the formation of libidinal groups (of friendship and love); and the establishment of a harmonious order, organizing these groups for work in accordance with the development of the individual *passions* (internal and external play of faculties).

Anarchist Hakim Bey⁶ describes Fourier’s ideas as follows: “In Fourier’s system of Harmony all creative activity including industry, craft, agriculture, etc. will arise from liberated passion—this is the famous theory of *attractive labor*. Fourier sexualizes work itself—the life of the Phalanstery is a continual orgy of intense feeling, intellection, & activity, a society of lovers & wild enthusiasts.”

Soviet socialism shared with its utopian socialist predecessors a critique of the conventional family and its household economy. Marx and Engels asserted that women’s emancipation

would follow the abolition of private property, allowing the family to be a union of individuals within which relations between the sexes would be a *purely private affair*. Building on this legacy, Lenin imagined a future when communal dining rooms, nurseries, kindergartens, and other industries would replace unpaid housework and childcare.

Hitler was also inspired by evolutionary ethics but the goal of his utopian project was to biologically improve the human race.

Hitler’s evolutionary ethic underlay or influenced almost every major feature of Nazi policy: eugenics (measures to improve human heredity, including compulsory sterilization), euthanasia, racism, population expansion, offensive warfare, and

5. Herbert Marcuse. *Eros and Civilization*. Beacon Press, Boston, MA, 1955. pg. 217

6. Hakim Bey (1991) “The Lemonade Ocean & Modern Times”

racial extermination. Hitler also believed that morality was biologically innate, so he thought that eliminating the *evil* Jews would bring moral progress.

The utopian yearnings have shape shifted throughout the years depending on the different stages of evolution and modernity. Marcel Gauchet, French historian, philosopher and sociologist has written about these different transformations of Utopia and has identified five shapes. He talks about the classical period of Utopia (between Thomas Moore's "Utopia" and 1770) where Utopia was projected into distant places.

Later on Utopia was no longer placed in exotic lands but in the future, his explanation was that there were no more new places to be discovered. Afterwards he observed the blueprint of the ideal socialist community such as Charles Fourier's "Phalastere" or Etienne Cabet's "Icaria". The difference between the last Utopias and the rest was that they

create a revolutionary consciousness in society; there was hope for change. However, nowadays it has lost this character but it cannot be said that Utopias have completely disappeared.

Living in an era of constant acceleration, the future has become unpredictable, so society is no longer waiting for a revolution.

That is why it is important to go far back, to its Natural Laws. Although now it may be a more quiet, invisible struggle for Utopia it is as important to think about it as it has always been.

The world is still fighting for Human Rights, for gender equality and other qualities

that should be a standard in society and not a desire.

Not to mention that World Peace has become such a distant cry that people don't even dare to think about it anymore.

The German historian and historical philosopher, Reinhart Koselleck has identified four general characteristics of Utopia: universalism; the dualistic exclusion mechanism between good and evil; the search for definitive solution to evil or eternal peace and the belief in constructability. What he means by this last facet is that not only God but also man is able to create an earthly paradise.

Constructability is therefore specific to modernity. It is the main principle that gave birth to totalitarian regimes and this is when Utopia takes shape of Dystopia.

Although initially socialist Utopia found the solutions to the world prob-

lems, it is in fact an illusion because it leads to repression, control, uniformity and lack of freedom.

Finally it can be said that the better the intentions of Utopia, the worst the results turned out to be when implemented. Every turning point in history has its own Utopia.

First it was the railways that would bring eternal peace. Later it was the airplane. And now it is the Internet that is supposed to bring global economy within reach. As some see the future in technology, others relate to it more like a Dystopia. Club of Rome, global think tank that deals with a variety of international political especially concerning the future of humanity, explains that only when techno-



Fig.3 Plug-in City by Peter Cook via Archigram Archives

logical growth starts getting out of control, Utopia becomes Dystopia.

The conflict Man/Machine has been the most dominant issue arising in the Utopias of the 20th century onwards.

Technology has taken different roles from the hope of salvation to the threat to a healthy life, from the union of both forces to the dominance of one over the other.

Peter Sloterdijk is a German philosopher, cultural theorist, television host and columnist whose ideas are sometimes referred to as post humanism. He proposes the creation of an *ontological constitution* that would incorporate all beings: humans, animals, plants, and machines. Total mobilization is the

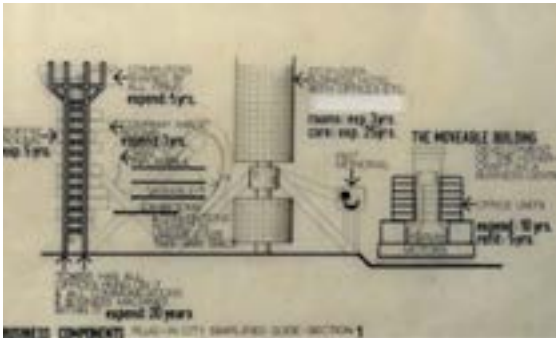


Fig.4 Plug-in City by Peter Cook via Archigram Archives

anthology of modern times in his view. The avant-garde architectural group, Archigram from the 1960's created a utopia of absolute mobility and they called it "Plug-in City". It was marked by new ideas at that time such as moving architecture. It was imagined as a mega-structure into which dwellings took shape of cells. Most of the components were standardized and machines had taken over.

In an age of total mobilization, places lose identity.

Rem Koolhaas, Dutch architect and architectural theorist elaborated on these changes in his article "The Generic City". He goes as far as stating that progress; architecture, the city and the street are things of the past. He describes a new dynamics: whereas the city was that scene in which the masses appeared, the generic city is the place in which

the masses leave the stage, in his famous quote “Relief... it’s over. That is the story of the city. The city is no longer. We can leave the theatre now...” The generic city is the evacuation of public domain leading to an unreal calm or how Rem Koolhaas names it the *artificial calm*. The architect warns the readers about this new universal city of the encapsulated society; the unreal calm is a warning.

Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa, founder of the metabolism movement reflected in his projects about this union/synergy between man and machine and he called it the capsule.

Rem Koolhaas’s idea of the generic city meets ends with Kurokawa’s cyborg architecture. He defines it: “Man, machine and space build a new organic body which transcends confrontation... it create an environment in itself”. Humans don’t necessarily have to become cyborgs, but they will use technology in order to equip themselves with various devices that would increase their human

capabilities, which won’t be something completely new as humans have used tools as extensions of their own body and actions before. His vision was a of a harmonious fusion and collaboration between man and machine. He imagined the new city not as a threat to human living as Rem Koolhaas did, but as a hope for the future where the home becomes a device and the device becomes a home. Clearly we have already experienced this, for example the car, the office space etc.

Talking of *real Utopias* French philosopher Michel Foucault uses the term *Heterotopia* to define a physical representation or an approximation of a Utopia.

Heterotopias
are spaces of
otherness, neither
necessarily
physical nor
mental, or both
simultaneously

such as one's reflection in the mirror or a phone call.

These spaces have multiple meanings and layers to them. They are everything and nothing in the same time. As the concept is so broad and difficult to grasp, Foucault tries to categorize them into groups depending on its essential characteristics. Firstly we may encounter crises heterotopias in motel rooms where honeymoons take place, as well as in boarding school where students get initiated into life etc. Heterotopias of deviation are usually found in hospitals, mental institutes, prisons or graveyards. Individuals whose behaviors are considered out of the norm form these heterotopias. However, the graveyard is a special case and its function is clear. Cemeteries have always existed but changed its meaning in society according with the times and how the cult of the

dead have evolved: from being the central point of the community to being marginalized outside of it. Anyway, it is still connected with the city because every person has at least a relative resting in there.

Heterotopia is a place that juxtaposes multiple spaces in.

The garden is one of them, because it is an existing place which is made out of different environments, it is a microcosm. Same principles apply with time and can clearly be found in museums. Museums enclose those artifacts so they become a temporal. Rituals are also considered heterotopias because either one needs permission or has to make certain gestures to be allowed in.

Finally, Foucault gives the example of the ultimate heterotopia being that of the ship, and refers to a soci-



Fig.5 Ivan Chicheglov, "Formulary for a New Urbanism"

ety without ships as a repressive one, in a clear reference to Stalinism.

Heterotopias are a parallel to Utopias or we may also refer to them as real Utopias that serve a large scale of people and didn't turn in to totalitarian dystopian political regimes.

They are special spaces in real places and each culture builds their own, according to their wishes.

Looking back at what has been said, we see the pattern and the evolution on Utopian thinking starting from the idealistic political system imagined in the Socratic dialogues, the socialist structures of order, the visionary projects of the avant-garde groups and finally the heterotopias described by Foucault, they all are a search for calm, order and peace, in a system that is based on strict but simple laws.

CHAPTER II

CHAOS

“We are bored in the city; there is no longer any Temple of the Sun. Between the legs of the women walking by, the Dadaists imagined a monkey wrench and the surrealists a crystal cup... that’s lost.”⁷ That is what Gilles Ivain writes about his contemporary cities. There is certain contempt against the complaisant character of this society. Everything is under control, there is no space

7. Gilles Ivain, ‘Formulaire pour une urbanism nouveau’, in Internationale Situationiste 1, June 1958 (reprint: Champ Libre, Paris, 1975), p.15

left for dreaming. Every detail is designed to avoid risks so adventure is eradicated.

Gilles Ivain or Chtcheglov was a significant member of the Situationist movement in the 1960s. Situationist theory was based on the concept of the spectacle, a critique of advanced capitalism of which a primary concern was the progressively increasing tendency towards the expression and mediation of social relations through objects. The situationists believed that the shift from individual expression through directly lived experiences, or the first-hand fulfillment of authentic desires, to individual expression by proxy through the exchange or consumption of commodities, or passive second-hand alienation, as a mere spectator, inflicted significant damage to the quality of human life for both individuals and society. They believed in counteracting the spectacle by constructing situations understood as moments of life

deliberately constructed for the purpose of reawakening and pursuing authentic desires and the liberation of everyday life.⁸

What it is fascinating about this particular group is their revolt against what most people would find ideal. Their Utopia was *the city of leisure par excellence* is what Chtcheglov stands for. Crazy as it may be, this idea is fascinating if we relate it to city planning and urbanism. How would a city of leisure look like? Guy Debord criticizes the new consumerism society and its fakeness in his famous book "The society of the Spectacle." He writes, "We should not forget that there is no culture without simulacra, without images, without sceneries." So what he means is that everything is a copy of a copy that was once a copy of another one. Nothing is truly authentic anymore and we don't experience city life as a continuous thing but

8. Guy Debord (1958) Definitions. Internationale Situationniste #1 (Paris, June 1958). Translated by Ken Knabb

rather as a series of events repeating each other. Clearly this phenomenon leads to separation, to the so-called encapsulated society. Nevertheless, people still “produce every detail of their world with ever-increasing power... The closer their life comes to their creation, the more they are excluded from that life.”

Is Utopia an exclusion of the real or is it reality condensed in wishes and laments?

Utopias are built on the deepest frustrations of people that plead for something else. It is a wish, a safe way to rebel against the unsatisfying. In a way it is worthless and unproductive. As Chtcheglov yearned a city of leisure in a world of boredom, we are not fighting anymore but complaining. Nowadays, Utopias don't rise revolutions but rather

silent cries. These whispers stay in our capsule. The catastrophe is costumed as a mere spectacle. We are passive and repetitive.

Architects who once defined themselves as rebels are now designing luxury residential towers for the super-rich.

Superstudio's⁹ sketches of the interrupted city of grids and mirrors are just beautiful pictures; later on to become commercial products sold in a design store. Everything is degrading. Anarchy is just merchandising campaign. What used to be punk is now fashion. Absurdity is the norm in a world that questions are not worth answering anymore. Nothing will make an impact so strong to stay. The society

9. Superstudio was an architecture firm, founded in 1966 in Florence, Italy by Adolfo Natalini and Cristiano Toraldo di Francia. Superstudio was a major part of the Radical architecture movement of the late 1960s

of speed and acceleration goes by like a hurricane: it brings the news, it shocks, it wipes out, and then they build everything back again as if nothing had happened.

The state
of Anarchy!
Everything we
ever learnt is
misguided!!

What is wrong about Utopian thinking nowadays is that it is only consumed as spectacle. It can be easily implemented in movie scripts or touristic attraction in a famous capital city. It doesn't raise strong feelings or revolutions. Thus making the consumerism society consume even more. They, the spectators take it bit by bit, passively, eating their popcorn and giggling. Then they head off to their tiny capsule home, isolated and separated. They only see through digital screens the reality designed by big corporations.

Utopia is a product that can be consumed, same as everything else!

The root of this evil is in the very way we are learned to think. We are made to worship the order of Le Corbusier's¹⁰ urban planning. Nevertheless it was as inhuman as it could get and the results of his very few implemented ideas have become an uninhabited ruin. Architectural students are educated to fulfill the requirements of their clients—

10. Le Corbusier (October 6, 1887 – August 27, 1965), was a Swiss-French architect, designer, painter, urban planner, writer, and one of the pioneers of what is now called modern architecture

the corporations—
without even being
aware of it. Their
creative process
is subordinate
to many rules
and limitations
imposed by
them. Creativity
is an illusion.

Architecture
contributes to
these political
systems by
building physical
devices that
affect public life.

Sociologist Richard Sennett proposes that the acceptance of order in the modern city has led to the underdevelopment of both individual and community. In “The Uses of Disorder” (1970), he describes the present individual as one who seeks a similar machine-like order along

the lines of Le Corbusier’s early modernist program.

Sennett describes the modern city as a bureaucratic, social and economic support structure for isolation, separation and suppression of individual and communal experience.

Sennett describes that only in a “dense, disorderly and overwhelming city” can an individual recognize the true complexity of life and human relations: “The jungle of the city, its vastness and loneliness, has a positive human value.” The city, in Sennett’s view, is the ultimate locality for exploring ethics and social diversity, is the environment that form its subjects not the other way around. “A city isn’t just a place to live, to shop, to go out and have kids play. It’s a place that implicates how one derives one’s ethics, how one develops a sense of justice, how one learns to talk and learn from people who are unlike oneself, which is how a human being becomes human.”

In order for humanity to rediscover social freedom and culture, Sennett proposes anarchy in typical 1970's advocate: he recommends a radical destabilization of power and perception.



Fig.6 Superstudio, The Continuous Monument Concept

Under the state of anarchy proposed by Sennett, every community would design their own space according to their individual demand and uniqueness. Sennett proposes an extreme form of participatory democracy. The government and its laws don't establish liberty. It will all be an agreement by dialogue within the community of individuals. If architecture were to exist in such a state, it would mean the breakdown of the entire political systems surrounding it. This

vision is radical as architecture as an anti-structure is not tolerated in our existing society.

Lebbeus Woods explores the creation of culture and social encounter in a similar manner to Sennett. He recognizes that architecture constructs a subjective position in the materialization of power.

“The architect speaks of designing spaces that satisfies human needs, but it is actually human needs that are being shaped in order to satisfy space.”

Woods attempts to create a *freespace* within the controlled city network, *freespace* being an area with no prescriptive function and no imposed behaviors. Human behavior is dynamic but highly influenced by

the inactive state of architecture. “People come and go, ways of living change, but architecture endures, an idealization of living.”

Woods visualized the concept of *freespace* in his “Berlin Free Zone” project (Fig.6), which is a series of drawings where he created machine-like ‘buildings’ within an area where the Berlin Wall once stood. Through the breakdown of architectural order and structure, Wood’s architecture involves the participant to redefine their definition of space. Internal tension between ideals and the need to survive emerges in a space of suspended conflict.

The concept of *freespace* provides a moment of dynamic and pattern less structure.

The geometry of Woods’ work is modeled upon the notion of the chaos theory.



Fig.7 Lebbeus Woods, Berlin Free Zone 1990

In this way his work offers a compelling critique on to the basic human condition of community.

“I’m not interested in living in a fantasy world. All my work is still meant to evoke real architectural spaces. But what interests me is what the world would be like if we were free of conventional limits. Maybe I can show what could happen if we lived by a different set of rules.” He proposes not a utopia but a heterotopia—a spatial environment where individual differences and conflicts come together.

The creation of buildings without walls is in direct opposition to the neoliberal dream of privatized spaces.

In conclusion what I find important to keep from the Anarchist is the role they give to the city. They don’t blame the inhabitants but the city for the evil in our societies. People grow up in a place that teaches them certain values on which they guide their lives.

Architecture
dictates its
rules upon its
inhabitants.

That is why architecture is an instrument of power.

The role of architecture has shifted from satisfying people's needs to serving the political power and thus restricting people.

"Architecture and war are not incompatible. Architecture is war. War is architecture. I am at war with my time, with history, with all authority that resides in fixed and frightened forms. I am one of millions who do not fit in, who have no home, no family, no doctrine, no firm place to call my own, no known beginning or end, no *sacred and primordial site*. I declare war on all icons and finalities, on all histories that would chain me with my own falseness, my own pitiful fears. I know only moments, and lifetimes that are as moments, and forms that

appear with infinite strength, then *melt into air*. I am an architect, a constructor of worlds, a sensualist who worships the flesh, the melody, a silhouette against the darkening sky. I cannot know your name. Nor you can know mine. Tomorrow, we begin together the construction of a city." Lebbeus Woods

MANIFESTO

INTRODUCTION

So far we have reached the conclusion that order is necessary in constructing a safe system. Laws need to be adopted and respected by all members of the society but that can only happen as long as the rules are simple and the subjects transparent. However, this doesn't have to be imposed in such a way that the people lose their freedom.

The system needs to make room for non-order as well, which allows expression and excitement.

Looking at the technological progress, we can now imagine a new *freespace* within a controlled society. In the Manifesto following, I will try to explain how the digital space is the new way of freedom for the people. We are already familiar with these happenings by we experiencing it every day. But it can only function ideally when being completely aware and transparent of its methods.

NO.1

ON THE CITY OF "CONNECTIVENESS"

The city and its function are undergoing many changes in a very short time due to fast technological developments. As a consequence we became commuters: we live somewhere, we work in a different place, we eat in another and we have fun again at a different location. As a result we are traveling much more and the time spent on the way is seen just as a stage in between.

The city is planned this way with its boring train stations and wagons

to serve only a single purpose, that of waiting to arrive somewhere.

Public spaces
such as stations
are just places
of transitions.

The means of public transport are a very good spot to observe people's behavior and how they use this architecture of transition. They come in and as soon as they find a comfortable sit, they take out their phone, plug in the headphones and get teleported into a digital realm of exciting imagery.

This second world
lies on top of the
material one.

Walking down
the streets from
place A to place
B is a completely
different

experience
when you are
connected.

It's not only about admiring the streets or watching your step. It is about the relation between what you are connected to digitally and the existing architecture. For example, if you are listening to classical music while walking from the tram stop to the building of your work, the pace of your footsteps might be relaxed and pay more attention to tiny details in your surrounding such as the cracks in the pavement. The volume that you are listening to has an impact on how you perceive places too. If the sound is really loud, you may not hear any noise coming from the traffic nor your footsteps, you are completely alienated from the street life into your own bubble.

The city
experience is an
individual one.

Even if there are ten people close together under the roof of the tram station on a rainy day, each one of the travelers is separated. The physical distance between them might indicate a personal distance, one that should trigger a conversation. However, mentally they are miles away. Each one of them is in their own world generated by an electronic device, which provides connection (computer, phone, tablet etc.) Sometimes two or three travelers might meet in the digital world before talking in the real one—if we think of popular phone apps such as Tinder (a dating website that shows how far away the person you fancy is from you)—The digital distance indicates the physical distance.

Being connected
is the condition of
the new generation and the
architecture of
connectiveness is

the architecture
of the future.

If we take for example the history of how people used the digital technology to connect, we can see how it gets closer to us until it will be easily incorporated into our own bodies.

The device became a second self that always accompanies us. The physical body connected to the digital one form the contemporary cyborg. The same exercise we can make looking at architecture. First there was a room and its only purpose was to host a huge computer at work. The user had to be in this space in order to operate it. Then, there was a hall with many computers connected to a router by wires and several operators working at once. Later, only one router gives wireless signal, which covers a certain distance as far as a building hosting several offices. This allows the users to move around the office while still being connected.

We expect a much higher expansion of the connection distance and even more.

We will be connected at all times in all places.

Architecture needs to provide the possibilities for this to happen. The city will be no more than a big router hosting all the computers connected to our bodies.

The city will enable people to be always connected. The need of connection will be so important that would be added to our primal needs such as eating/breathing/drinking etc. We won't be able to function in the city easily without it.

Having said this, the urban experience will be the result of the collision between the physical experience and the layers added to it by the digital means. The borders between the two worlds would be so blurred and sometimes even non-existing.

The city becomes the host of a digitally enhanced experience.

NO.2

FREEDOM

The User has the ultimate choice. The new way of being connected will change the manner we operate in the city and how this should look like. The city would then be just the surface on which our fantasies are going to be projected. It is the primer on a blank canvas ready to be painted. We, the inhabitants are the artists that shape our way into the public space.

We are the main decisive factor of what it is going to happen and how.

So the condition of the future human being is the ultimate power of choice.

Nowadays, we are still slaves to other's decisions. Commercials, pictures, and all sort of sensorial material that we never chose for or had any interest in, are overwhelming us. We are not able to absorb it any longer and it needs to stop. We cannot accept that other factors take the decisions for us. Such violation of ones freedom should not permitted, as everybody should have their own connection based on what they want to experience.

The user would be able to fully control what he or she is exposed to.

Finally, public space will regain its tranquility and its simplicity. The old historical center shall be preserved for the heritage and culture but the new urbanism would be based on the needs of the user only.

There won't be any necessity for advertisement boards nor traffic signs.

Everything shall be organized online and everybody will be able to access it. The public space should be designed in such a way it provides the base of such connections.

Finally, architecture's role is not to impress but to guide.

Its presence should be symbolic yet efficient. The shapes should adopt fluid and natural lines according to the different kinds of movement of its users.

The city would become only the shell of an intertwined network of connections between its users. They are the ones that build it but only temporarily and individually.

In a world of
intense and
continuous
exposure of
all senses we
need to search
for tranquility.

NO.3

MOBILITY, FLEXIBILITY, MULTI-FUNCTIONALITY

Alienation in the contemporary city
is caused by a gap between the fast
development of technology and our
inability as humans to change as
rapidly as the computers do.

We feel left
behind among
the machines
because there is
not enough time
to get used to it.

However, we, humans should not let ourselves outlived by machines but find solutions that helps us catch up. We create the devices to assist us.

The machine is meant to increase our natural abilities so we become more than humans.

Understanding this new being is rather complicated and challenging. But we are going to explain it as simple as possible. The human of the future is the human that uses simultaneously both his natural abilities and the objects created into a complete human/machine union, the cyborg. The cyborg is not to be compared to the very common science fiction image of the half human half robot android.

The cyborg is a human that works closely with objects.

When the device gets incorporated into his body, it disappears from sight. So visually it is nonexistent but functionally it is very present. The designers need to understand this close, intimate relationship between user and the object in order to adapt and improve the devices. Objects are prototypes of certain parts of our own nature but can only work together with a living body. So they make no sense unless powered by human activity. That is why we should think of temporarily designs. Times change fast, so do our needs. Talking on a larger scale we need to take buildings as an important reflection upon this phenomenon.

Objects can always change their function.

This quality should be stressed. Humans need to work closely with objects now more than ever. Humans need to understand objects. It is irrel-

evant to destroy and build down every
time something is outdated.

We need to learn how to cope
with the old and the new in order to
create efficiency.

NO.4

AESTHETICS OF THE MOVEMENT

By eliminating all factors of
distraction, it does not mean it
leads to architecture of no details.
But the focus is rather on shapes
and lighting.

Surfaces are the bases for the
projections that users are going
to experience. So they need to
fulfill the requirements of such
projections.

The aesthetics
of this new

architecture are
the aesthetics
of surfaces.

The city is one gigantic screen. The building materials are reflecting surfaces, clean and sensitive to light. Walls, pavement, roofs etc. are all parts of this screen, capable of bringing to life one's imagination. Buildings won't be so much separated by its use; such as train stations are only waiting places. But they can instantly become anything the user wants it to be. Because of its shifting nature, it can turn into a dance floor, a cinema, and a bar etc. at anytime.

If you are tired
waiting for your
train, you can
connect to your
circle of favorite
digital experiences;
talk to your friends
and even start a
party right there.

Of course the party will only happen for you and the people connected to your circle.

In these circumstances it won't be weird anymore for people to express themselves freely in public. It will be perfectly accepted if a person starts dancing and enjoying the music they listen in a bus stop. While others might be extremely concentrated doing their work or other just simply enjoying a movie and eating supper. Nobody will look weird at each other if she is laughing or moving *strangely*. They all understand they are connected to something. It will be normal that they don't understand what is going on with that person unless they get in contact digitally.

Judging somebody by its appearance that is *out of the ordinary* is something that will not happen. There won't be any norms about identity. Looks won't be a decisive factor about one's seriousness or capabilities. The user will be more in control of

his/her own appearance as well.
They can use the projections to create their outfits, make up, etc.

People can experience and play with their appearance in real life using digital means just as its possible with avatars.

They can generate new styles and change if they don't like it.
Nothing is static.

NO.5

ON A DIFFERENT KIND OF PRIVACY

By connecting to huge server, which is the city, everybody allows certain information to be public while some not.

People's profile is composed of personal information that they agree to share online.
The next layer is their updates.

Updates such as check in a place and leaving a comment about it. Such updates are recorded in the city server, which is further connected to the specialists that work on shaping this space according to the users.

Private information is protected by passwords and if these profiles are hacked then the problem is sent to a further department that takes care of the cases of violation of private information. Having said this, we need to introduce a new kind of police. However, they have little in common with the police we are used to now.

The police consist of guardians of information and protect one's security in the server.

They are operators that use the same big server to make sure each user is safe and their privacy is not violated. They don't need to use

violence, but only programs in order to push away any undesirable exposure. These programs are able to trace the hackers and block them from having access to protected information.

These *guards* are always connected to the big server and have access to all users accounts. Their operations are only digital and never physical. Physical harm would not be possible in such a city.

By being connected you are aware that such security is necessary and it might access your personal information when there is a violation involved. However the user must agree to make his information visible to the security programs before any

operation is being performed.

The security forces would only operate in cases that are of major importance, usually affecting a large group and cannot be handled by the users privacy settings.

The personal privacy settings allow the user to edit what information is being sent and received. It can moderate the communication between the users and can go as far as blocking certain users from one's network. By blocking another user, the two—or more users—will become invisible to one another.

They wont be able to establish any connection unless all users involved are being unblocked. Disappearing from certain networks increases one's safety and helps people avoid any sort of abuse.

So, every user can handle its own security and if not, the problem can be reported and the case sent to specialized forces.

NO.6

HIERARCHIES OF CONTROL AND THE NEW LAYER OF OPERATORS

Being able to connect at all times in any place would change our perception of time for sure.

Working hours
would be adjusted
to each person's
lifestyle.

That means that people won't be stuck in the office during the regular office hours. It will enable people to

work anywhere anytime if they want to. They will be able to plan their time according how they please. Offices are a convention, a thing of the past.

The office of the future is online and people will be the masters of time.

The jobs will mainly consist of operating and managing operations. Computers and machines do the work that has been instructed to them and programmed by human mind. Humans are the ones inventing and developing systems. By saying this we can imagine that what we know now as the office building will slowly become smaller and maybe even perish.

The data is online same as the workers use digital space as working space.

This new way of working will reorganize social hierarchies in such a way that one's status won't be influenced only by what one earns.

Money will disappear and replaced by digital numbers.

NO.7

ETHICS OF BEING

If the concept of money and material well-being will be replaced by self development, humans will be more focused of learning and enjoying life.

Fun and earning
a living will be
closely connected
and intertwined
into daily life.
Belongings are
symbolic in the
digital space.

Materialism won't exist there because people are going to focus on achieving and experiencing rather than having. The levels of experience are based on the rules of video games, as we know them. The user goes through different kinds of challenges, if won; he/she gets rewarded and moves on to the next level. If failed, they are given the chance to repeat, change it or ask for help from the fellow users.

In this new order, it is more important what you do in order to become something than what you get by doing something.

The status of one person rises when he/she experiences more dangerous challenges and succeeds.

The successful user helps the others by teaching them how to work in

certain situations and by teaching others he advances in his own experience levels.

Secondly, users are always interacting in order to help each other. They are building together digital spaces and developing their own challenges.

It is a world of transparency and playfulness in a space that adapts perfectly to the users expectations and commands.

NO.8

THE ARCHITECTURE OF NO PLACE

Architecture
gives shelter.

Nevertheless of all the digital
spaces, people are still human and
need protection.

While they are
free and harmless
in digital realm,
their bodies are
still subjects to
harsh conditions.

The mind works closely with the body and cannot function when it is sick. That is why architecture is meant to give shelter and protect people.

Apart from providing shelter, architecture is also the main element that guides the users' digital experiences in the real life. It supports the movements and the visions. It is composed to guiding roads and reflecting walls.

People will not
need objects
anymore such as
we know now.

They wont be hanging paintings on the wall or have vases of flowers on their dining tables. It won't be necessary. The paintings will exist in their world and will be available to all the other users that are allowed to access it. But it won't physically exist. The most physical things of this world will be the gigantic roofs

hosting these users and the people themselves, with their bodies and their movements.

Connected,
architecture is rich
and personalized,
when not
connected it
is blank. Our
existence will be
synthesized to
the essence of
our intelligence.

By being less distracted by the material side of things, doors will open for us to discover the magic of our lives, of parallel lives, of wishes that can be fulfilled, experiences that can be relived and improved, of memories that stay forever, of chances that never go away.

NO.9

DEATH

Although we may have found solutions to a lot of our contemporary problems in digital space, death is still under discussion.

However, I may as well end up with this subject as it opens up a whole new topic.

By giving solution to death, I propose I already know what death is and that is an indecent assumption, which I won't, take responsibility for.

Death is as mysterious as our imagination.

Death can be
fooled by memo-
rizing a users
activity and
perform it after his
system is down.

Apparently, he will seem alive but
actually he will be on repeat. This
copy of a users performances will
never concur new achievements but
rather simulate the ones he already
been through.

Digital space
is no answer to
death but rather
to memory.

It unlocks unknown territories in our
own minds and helps us develop but
it won't stop the physical aging. Pro-
logue or Tribute to "The Holy Moun-
tain". I would like to mention the
movie "Holy Mountain" by director
Alexandro Jodorowski as one of my
greatest inspirations while working
on this project and not only.

Holy Mountain is a movie like no
other because all inhibitions are set
free. It shows a surrealistic world
populated by freaks. All charac-
ters are exaggerated and portrait
by subversive visuals. It is a world
of creeps and maniacs. But what
sit is the most shocking is that we
can recognize them all. They show
us human nature without masks. It
unveils the secrets of our existence
in a mocking tone.

The most important role is the
Alchemist, played by the director
himself. The Alchemist trains the
most important people of the world
in achieving the ultimate knowledge.
They accept to go into a spiritual
journey lead by the Alchemist, meant
to enlighten them. But at the end of
the movie, they discover how limited
human beings are. The journey is a
prank. It is an illusion. The goal is
impossible. However, the end is not
what matters but the journey itself.

The first part of the movie shows
the different fields these important

people are working in. They are manufacturing weapons, creating war toys, or managing a factory of art. Everything is being mocked making us realize the degradation of our society. Everything is part of a process. It can be sold and wasted.

Nothing is sacred!!

The images are overwhelming combining Christian iconography, Latin American history, futurism, mysticism, and political commentary. You experience a sensory overload. It shows things we all know but never dare to talk about it. It unveils all of our fears and disappointments.

What I find it essential to mention is that all those evil and gory visuals are just part of the spiritual journey. First you point the evil, then you name it, after you accept it and finally you try to cure it. This journey of being, the change!

Researching on Utopian thinking, implementing it on a possible future

scenario in a manifesto and drawing inspiration from the subversive imagery of the Holy Mountain helped me build the first layers for my upcoming projects.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
AND SOURCES:

- Johnathan Beecher, *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World*, University of California Press. 1986, pp. 195–196.
- Lieven de Cauter, *The Capsular Civilization. On the City in the Age of Fear*, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam 2004
- Ivan Chtcheglov, *Formulary for a New Urbanism*, Translation of the Newly Published Complete Version
- Guy Debord, *La societe du Spectacle*, Editions Champ Libre, Paris 1971
- Michel Foucault, trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Of Other Spaces*, Diacritics 1986
- Charles Fourier, 1772–1837, *Selections from his Writings* Retrieved November 25, 2007
- Kumar, Krishan, *Utopianism*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991
- Sir Thomas More, *Utopia*, David Wootton, ed. Hackett Publishing Company, Cambridge, England, 1999.
- Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, Allan David Bloom, Basic Books, 1991.
- Rem Koolhaas, and Bruce Mau, *Small, Medium,*

Large, Extra Large [S,MLXL], 010 Publishers, Rotterdam 1995.

- Kisho Kurokawa, *Metabolism in Architecture*, 1977.
- Walter Russell Mead (Winter 1995–1996). *Trains, Planes, and Automobiles: The End of the Post-modern Moment*, World Policy Journal
- Saskia Sassen, *The global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1991
- R. Sennett, 1970, *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life*, Norton & Company, New York, N.Y.
- Tom McDonough, *The Situationists and the City*, Verso, 2009
- W Richter Michaela, *Introduction: Translation of Reinhart Koselleck's "Krise"*, in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* by Melvin Richter.
- Manuel Castells. *The Rise of the Network Society (The Information Age. Economy, Society and Culture. Volume I) Blackwell*, Malden. (Massachusetts)/Oxford 1996
- Karl Mannheim, Louis Wirth and Edward Shils. *Ideology and Utopia: an Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, New York, Harcourt, Brace
- L. Woods, *The Dreaming Satellite*, 2010
<http://septimus7.tripod.com/ibea/gall10.html>

●● UTOPIA

Text: LAURA A. DIMA

Graphic Design: ANDRADA SMARANDA

Printed at: SIL'S DRUKWERK

●● UTOPIA: THE CABINETS

●● UTOPIA: THE INITIATION

●● UTOPIA: THE ORACLE

Photography: JIMMY ON THE RUN

3D Models: STEVEN MCLEAN

Assistance: JORDI ARIZA GALLEG0

Music: MAARTEN NAUW

Voices: LAURA A. DIMA, NATASJA ALERS, JORDI ARIZA GALLEG0, LOEKE GERRITSEN, STEWART GRANGER, MAARTEN NAUW, LEENDERT VOOIJE

AMSTERDAM 2015

