

Utopia as Critical Method

A Comparative Analysis of Six Architectural and Literary Utopias

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Propositions

1. Utopia – as most other creative forms – has changed throughout the last several centuries, which is why we should no longer look for it (or create it) in the form of totalizing narratives, but rather in more multifaceted and fragmented forms which take into account the complexity of our context.

This proposition pertains to this dissertation

2. Architects should learn from literary writers to focus more on imagining how different environments can be inhabited and consequently how these environments affect the individuals which inhabit them.

3. Utopias, while most commonly created by a single author, are not an individual's wishful fantasy, but rather a critical reflection of the author's social and spatial context which is relevant from a much broader perspective than that of a single individual.

This proposition pertains to this dissertation

4. Utopia is imagined within the realm of the plausible, operating between the borders of possible and impossible.

This proposition pertains to this dissertation

5. Architecture is not utopian by default – many architectural projects lack a projective critical reflection on the socio-spatial context for which they are conceived.

6. The notion of form in architecture does not have to only address ways in which space is physically manifested, it can also signify different societal structures which inhabit it.

7. Academic architectural research should embrace the creative and speculative tools and methods of architectural practice in order to offer new avenues of research and create new forms of knowledge.

8. As architects we often create more stories than buildings, establishing communication – verbal, textual, or drawing based – as one of the architect’s most valuable skills. As such, communication – in its reflective, projective, and representational form – should be one of the most relevant parts in the curriculum of architectural education.

9. While a picture is worth a thousand words, I argue that words – in the form of textual descriptions – can also produce thousands of images which differ greatly depending on the imagination of their reader.

10. The drawing is not only a representational tool. It can also be a discursive one.