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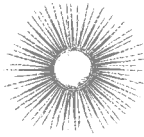
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Utopic Pedagogies: Alternatives to Degenerate Architecture

Nathaniel Coleman

ABSTRACT

Although Utopia makes reasonably frequent appearances within humanities and social science teaching, it remains at the far periphery of architecture education. Thus, any essay proposing the relevance of utopic pedagogies for architecture education, and its subsequent professional practice, must come to terms with the strange absence of Utopia from the heart of the curriculum (and from the concerns of most architecture students, educators, and practitioners). With the pervasive omission of Utopia in mind, in this article I will first offer an overview of how and why Utopia has become anathema for architecture education (no doubt associated with the failures of orthodox modern architecture during the post–World War II years and the explanation of this failure as down to Utopia), followed by counterexamples drawn from my own teaching, in which Utopia is as much the subject as the object of architecture and urban design education, in equal measure for history, theory, and design. If the postmodern conviction in architecture is that Utopia equals totalitarianism and defeat, my argument is that without Utopia, architecture and urban design have no vocation other than to adorn capital and its processes (which of course explains its disappearance: Neoliberalism confirms Utopia’s irrelevance, or does it?).

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Part I: The Absent Presence of Utopia

Although Utopia makes reasonably frequent appearances within humanities and social science teaching (at least as a topic, even if only to be denounced), it remains at best at the far periphery of architecture education. Thus, any essay proposing the relevance of utopic pedagogies for architecture education, and its subsequent professional practice, must come to terms with the strange absence of Utopia from the heart of the curriculum (and from the concerns of most architecture students, educators, theorists, historians, and practitioners).

It is with such a pervasive absence in mind that in this article I will first offer a brief overview of how and why Utopia has become anathema for architecture education (something to do with the failures of orthodox modern architecture during the post–World War II years and the explanation of this failure as down to Utopia), followed by counterexamples drawn from my own teaching, in which Utopia is as much the subject as the object of architecture and urban design education, in equal measure for history, theory, and design. If the postmodern conviction in architecture is that Utopia equals totalitarianism and defeat, my argument is that without Utopia, architecture and urban design have no vocation other than to adorn capital and its processes (which of course goes far in explaining Utopia’s absence: for architecture at least, neoliberal currents in procurement and practice appear to confirm Utopia’s irrelevance).

Even so, in many ways, even at its most conventional, architecture and urban design education is inherently progressive in the sense articulated by the pedagogical theorist David Halpin (2007). On the one hand, the studio basis of design education, steeped as it is in ancient models of craft, originating in the medieval guild traditions of the direct transmission of knowledge between *masters* and *novices* (although now ideally mediated by a healthy dose of postmodern doubt), inevitably encourages modes of inquiry that are “student-directed” rather than “teacher-initiated” and as such emphasize “learning” rather than “teaching” (Halpin 2007, 244). On the other hand, this potentially progressive aspect of architecture education is only minimally theorized either in the literature on architecture pedagogy or performatively by architecture educators in their teaching practice. The professional nature of architecture education has a great deal to do with this. Subjected as architecture degree programs are to the regimes of professional accreditation (intended to protect the professional title of architect and consumers of

architect's services alike), there is a tendency toward a relative standardization of curricula across schools, which is partnered with a general overemphasis on technical and representational skills, over and above the cultivation of social imagination and, its correlate, architectonic expression.

When architecture education does focus on "imaginaries," rather than employability in the form of ready insertion of graduates within conventional—market-driven—practices, the register is primarily *fanciful*, related more to unbuildable projects unburdened by the demands of use, or the complexities of individual and communal appropriation of the built environment, than to the real possibility that the world could be remade beyond the limits of what is apparently already possible. If there is a utopian aspect to such paper-palace fantasies, it is in an *abstract* rather than *concrete* utopian sense (after Bloch's distinction between the two).

In this regard, Halpin's attempts at defining utopianism and its value for articulating what might constitute progressive education has obvious direct relevance for how the radical nature of architecture education might be theorized and practiced more explicitly. Equally, his definition suggests how Utopia's vocation for reimagining the given could be reembraced in architecture education to revalue the inherently (or at least potentially) utopian vocation of architecture. According to Halpin, "Utopianism . . . is a distinctive vocabulary of hope [that] teaches us that society, including its physical sites of social and political practice, are both imagined and made and that we can accordingly believe that they can be reimagined and remade" (2007, 243). Potentially, at least, architecture has a capacity for articulating Utopia's "distinctive vocabulary of hope," both visually and materially, by providing it with a concrete *syntax* by which the elements of this vocabulary might be organized to form meaningful sites of progressive potential, which reveals architecture as also potentially a *semantics* of Utopia as well.

Although twentieth-century architecture may well have begun with a utopian impulse, it was arguably far less pervasively utopian than modern or postmodern histories of architecture and conventional narratives of its failures might lead one to believe. Beginning in the 1960s and continuing still, attempts to make sense of the shortcomings of twentieth-century modernist architecture have explained its deficiencies as an inevitable outcome of the putative utopian aspirations of modern architects and theorists. However, the circular logic that equates rejection of orthodox modern architecture with a rejection of Utopia (and both for the better) affirms a species of

overconfidence in the veracity of interpretations advancing such a view. But what if modern architecture was never quite as utopian as imagined?

What if modern architecture, at its heart, has always been far more Fordist and Taylorist than implicated in proposing and establishing settings for the socially progressive transformation of existing conditions (Coleman 2007, 2011a, 2011b)? Despite the mostly uncritical assertion of the utopianness of modern architecture by architects, historians, theorists, and critics, and following them, students and sectors of the general public as well, I would like to make a counterassertion (which is at the core of my pedagogy) that not only was modern architecture not as utopian as presumed but its failings can actually be understood as resulting, at least partly, from a poverty of utopian imagination: modern architecture was never utopian enough. Neither Ebenezer Howard (1850–1928), nor Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959), nor even Walter Gropius (1883–1969), nor Le Corbusier (1887–1965) was a utopian in the ways usually ascribed to them by authors including Jane Jacobs (1916–2006), Colin Rowe (1920–1999), and Robert Fishman, among others (Fishman 1982; Jacobs 1992; Rowe and Koetter 1978).

While it is possible to argue for the relative utopianism of Howard, Wright, Gropius, or Le Corbusier in particular (which I have done elsewhere), it is at best aspects of their respective plans or some specific examples of their buildings (other than Howard, who was not an architect) where some suggestion of Utopia might be found, despite the discomfort each would have had with such an association. In many ways, Ernst Bloch and Manfredo Tafuri encourage the reading of twentieth-century modernist architecture as less utopian than conventionally assumed that is advanced here. Thus, strangely, the absence of Utopia from architecture, including from its education, is as much as anything founded on a myth, in many ways understandably spun by Karl Popper in *The Poverty of Historicism* (1957 [see 1961]) and *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1962 [see 1966]), which laid the foundations of the anti-utopianism that has persisted ever since, including in architecture.

It is with the understanding of the rejection of Utopia in architecture developed above, and the dubiousness of the justifications for this, in mind that I would like to turn briefly to a consideration of perhaps one of the most convincingly utopian architects of the twentieth century. The German architect Bruno Taut (1880–1938) and his German literary collaborator Paul Scheerbart (1863–1915), especially in the former's Glashaus (Glasshouse) pavilion (1914, temporarily erected at the Cologne Deutscher

Werkbund Exhibition), and as developed in his 1919 essay “Die Stadtkrone” (“City Crown” [2009]) and in the latter’s 1914 novel *Glasarchitektur* (*Glass Architecture* [1972]), elaborated on the possibilities of architectural transactions with Utopia, even though modern architecture quickly became mainstream as it moved from the periphery to the center of culture (Bloch 1986, 736–37; Coleman 2005, 88–112; Ersoy 2011).

Cast as a proponent of Expressionism, Taut has been largely relegated to the edges of architecture culture because of the movement’s association with excess and exaggeration. Nevertheless, at least in the period of the Glashaus and “Die Stadtkrone,” Taut’s theory and practice might best be understood through a lens of science fiction, a perspective certainly encouraged by his association with Scheerbart. The story of transcendence through glass advocated by both is utopian in a literary sense of imagining a much improved human condition achieved through processes of transformation that have been developed in great detail (Ersoy 2011).

But architecture is concrete and mundane and, as Ernst Bloch (1986, 737) observed, so fully imprisoned by existing cultural and economic conditions that it can do little more than replicate what is, absent of any possible utopian vision extending beyond the limits of the given. Perhaps, but Taut and Scheerbart were serious about their project in a manner that separates them from techno-utopian Futurist visionary architects such as Antonio Sant’Elia (1888–1916). Sant’Elia, although a Futurist closely associated with Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876–1944), and Taut are often co-located as proponents of architectural Utopia in books on the topic (Borsi 1997, 47–48, 118–23, 130; Eaton 2001, 164, 166–67, 169, 179, 182–83). While this point might seem trivial, it helps to shed light on how and why Utopia and utopianism have ultimately been banished from architectural thought and practice but especially from its education, a problem brought into stark relief by Franco Borsi in *Architecture and Utopia*, when he says of Sant’Elia’s Futurist designs that “none of those images questioned the nature of society, institutional models, or the human condition” (1997, 47). If not, then one must be left to wonder on what basis the work could be identified with Utopia. And yet, Borsi’s identification of Sant’Elia’s designs as utopian, followed by a description that makes it impossible to see them as such, is as typical of books on architecture and Utopia as it is of considerations of Utopia in architecture education.¹

However one might feel about Taut, it would be difficult to ignore his preoccupation with the *nature of society*, *institutional models*, and *the human condition*, making his claim to Utopia that much more convincing. At any

rate, apart from the apparent shared infeasibility of Sant'Elia's and Taut's designs (at least his City Crown and Alpine Architecture projects), which has come to be understood as a key factor in identifying architectural utopias, the work of these two architects could not be more different. Crucially, it is a difference with relevance for how Utopia could influence architecture in a convincingly progressive way, not least by returning a preconception with the social and the political to the core of its concerns.

For Sant'Elia, mechanization and technology were ends in themselves. Consider Marinetti's obsession with speed, warfare, and destruction as dissociative, aesthetic preoccupations, outlined in the "Futurist Manifesto" (1909) and echoed in Sant'Elia's "Manifesto of Futurist Architecture" (1914). Whereas Taut's preoccupation was with *transcendence*, the Futurists emphasized *destruction*, which has become one of the key identifying characteristics for elucidating the supposed certain failures of architectural utopias. Large (dehumanizing) scale and an apparent ahistoricity are others. Nevertheless, if for Taut transcendence was the aim, he welcomed technology if it could help, and why not? The value of this distinction lies in aiding understandings of the difference between *technological utopianism* and *utopianism* (Coleman 2005, 6, 73–81, 234, 254). In this sense, technology was a convenience, not an end. If Taut arguably represents the most convincing example of explicit utopianism in modern architecture, this perhaps also goes some way in explaining the banishment of Utopia from architecture education: his ecstatic, universalizing socialism would inevitably have proved just a bit too much for mainstream architects, trained within the capitalist or communist systems alike.³

Even if Taut may be the most utopian of twentieth-century architects, any treatment of Utopia in architecture and its banishment from education must contend with Le Corbusier, at least for a moment. Le Corbusier is so frequently demonized as the dark lord of utopianism in modern architecture and urbanism that the questionable accusations against him barely warrant repeating (Dalrymple 2009; Jacobs 1992; Smith 2001). More nuanced versions of the story of the rise and fall of twentieth-century modern architecture cast Le Corbusier as split between the remarkable subtleties of his individual buildings and the brutally reductive excesses of his city plans, in the sense that the former exist in the realm of art, while the latter apparently breaks upon the specter of Utopia (Maycroft 2002; Rowe and Koetter 1978). Either way, the division of Le Corbusier in this way neglects the interrelation of his individual buildings and city plans alike. On the one hand, it is sure that many if not all of Le Corbusier's individual buildings were conceived in the

spirit of Utopia (though rarely if ever explicitly stated), and on the other, his city plans never represented blueprints for direct, unmediated, or unreflected action (Coleman 2005; Leatherbarrow 1993, 59–64; Rowe 1996).

At the very least, Le Corbusier's city plans were imagined potential wholes of which his individual buildings formed a theoretical or imaginative part, even when constructed. Equally, his city plans were thought experiments, fields of mental play, rather than contract documents (Coleman 2005; Leatherbarrow 1993, 59–64; Rowe 1996). Beyond that, Le Corbusier arguably conceived of the individual buildings he designed, La Tourette and the Marseilles block, among others, through a utopian frame provided by monasticism (arguably the most convincing model of utopianism for architecture and urban planning, in its enduring manifestations, including college campuses, steamships, and some factory compounds as well) (Coleman 2005, 115–32; Serenyi 1967).

As large a figure as Le Corbusier is, in this instance, Sant'Elia and Taut arguably provide more instructive cases to consider relative to the absence or presence of Utopia in architecture education. Thus, so far as the confusion caused by conflating Taut and Sant'Elia is concerned, Karl Mannheim is helpful in clearing things up, both in explaining the association of Utopia with violence, in the image of "shattering" an existing order, and in suggesting a way beyond the rejection of Utopia in architectural education by helping to reveal how much of what is considered utopian in architecture—because it is thought to be impossible, violent, and inhumane—just does not stack up as utopian, at least not in the sense of *shattering* that Mannheim intends in the following quote, which seems cognate with utopian expressions more generally, literary but also in the form of projects and programs: "However, we should not regard utopia as every state of mind which is incongruous with and transcends the immediate situation (and in this sense, 'departs from reality'). Only those orientations transcending reality will be referred to by us as utopian which, when they pass over into conduct, tend to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order which prevails at the time" (1985, 192). A close reading of this passage suggests how claims to Utopia might be tested, how the negative intent of most such claims may be answered, and also how the prospect of a more genuinely utopian architecture could be imagined, on the road to Utopia.

In the first instance, Mannheim cautions against calling everything that departs from reality *utopian*, such as impossible-to-realize visionary projects or the extravagant excesses of techno-utopianism, of the sort projected

by Sant'Elia. Rather, according to Mannheim, only those projects may be called utopian that wholly, or in part, succeed in *shattering* the existing order. Thus, the charge of fancy or impossibility leveled at Utopia, in justification of banishing it, from architecture education, for example, is self-serving at best. Practice and vocation are key aspects of the project of Utopia. In this sense, the province of Utopia is research and testing: method. As such, Utopia could not be better suited to the enrichment of architecture education, theory, and practice. In turn, the absence of Utopia that dominates architecture culture in the present goes far in explaining the failure of architecture to reach beyond the limitations of aestheticized form or image or stultifying technique, leaving it almost always restricted to either a replication or an adornment of the given (neoliberal) condition.

Part II: Teaching Utopia as Consciousness in Architecture

In the preceding section, a historical explanation for the absence of Utopia from architecture education was offered that also provides a backdrop to my own attempts to reintroduce it to architecture teaching, which are outlined in this section. In this and subsequent sections of this article, how the reintroduction of Utopia to the education of architects and urban designers enables, if not promises, better architectural and urban outcomes is suggested, in the sense of potentially providing settings better suited to everyday life and the desires of intended inhabitants.

However, before continuing, I am mindful that any project to reintroduce Utopia as a valuable method to architecture and urban design education, and the conviction that doing so will bring superior results, is, in itself, a fundamentally utopian project, in much the way education at its most virtuous and altruistic has always been. Even so, no matter the renewed potential revaluing Utopia promises, within architecture education at least, Utopia is seen as a dangerous liability, held largely responsible for the legion failures of orthodox modern—mid-twentieth-century—architecture, a condition neatly summarized by architectural historian Hilde Heynen:

Of all the criticisms that modern architecture has had to endure since the 1960s, the one of utopianism has apparently had the most impact. It seems that, by now, almost everybody is convinced that modern architecture's utopian ambition was its most harmful attribute.

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Its utopian aspirations are usually seen as completely bound up with paternalistic, not to say totalitarian attitudes, and are for that reason discredited and put aside. The idea formulated by Paul Scheerbart, that culture is a product of architecture and that the enhancement of architecture would therefore result in an enhancement of culture, is denounced as utterly unrealistic. (2002, 382)

But if it is now impossible to imagine architecture as somehow engaged in the production of culture and the idea that its enhancement in turn enhances culture is now all but unthinkable, what possible vocation could it have? Since the 1960s, the conventional response to this question has been “none.” Architecture is now so profoundly empty ideologically, so it goes, that the only choice remaining lies somewhere between “autonomy” and “formalism,” imagined as at least inoculating architecture against “dangerous” utopianism and the excesses of the modern movement (read: instrumentalism/totalitarianism [Tafuri 1976]).

The failure of contemporary mainstream politics to capture (or inspire) imagination in the direction of achieving better—superior—conditions has arguably been as destructive to democracies and social life as the ideological emptying out of architecture has been for the realization, even partially, of the just city. Nevertheless, my own pedagogy begins with the stubborn refusal of this supposedly necessary emptiness (and fictional autonomy), with the companion overemphasis on image, aesthetics, technique, and efficiency alike that follows from it. As such, I will now turn to the manifestation of social and political engagement suggested by Utopia in my teaching.

My primary teaching encompasses the three main areas of the architecture curriculum, apart from technology, including history, theory, and design. Although general educational practice in architecture does not normally bring the three together in a unified or interdependent way, my pedagogy attempts to do so, under the twin stars of Utopia and the humanities (Coleman 2003, 2010; Coleman et al. 2011). More specifically, the classes I have most recently delivered include a series of history lectures for second-year architecture students on the development of twentieth-century architecture (pushed back to the earliest stirrings of the modern in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to its continuing developments in the twenty-first). Up until the 2011–12 academic year I had also led an architecture/urban design studio for fifth-year (second-degree) architecture students that appears to have fallen victim, at least in part, to its utopian aspirations. And I also run a seminar for

master's-level urban design students, which, after the now cancelled studio project, is perhaps the most explicitly utopian of my offerings, tracing a line of utopian thinking on architecture and the city in modernity, from Bruno Taut to my own work on architecture and Utopia.

Architecture education is arguably dominated by skills development in one direction and the production of interesting images in the other. In most instances, missing from this constellation are the humanities, on the one hand, and the profoundly social dimension of architecture, on the other. Yet, because architecture education is primarily vocational—in the sense of being related to getting a job but not generally to cultivating a *vocation*, in the sense of a calling—beyond professional indoctrination, much of the discipline's richness must be introduced through stealth or put off until doctoral-level studies. Not surprisingly, most students are far more preoccupied with skills acquisition and job procurement alone, rather than with the manifold richness of architecture as well (Coleman 2003, 2010; Coleman et al. 2011). The more gifted design students tend to adapt to the main currents of architecture culture, including cultivating a preoccupation with autonomy, form, the production of interesting images, or technique, but usually not the humanities or social dimensions of architecture. This condition thus raises the question of how more varied, deeper, and broader interests in architecture culture might be encouraged. As already hinted at, in my view, the missing richness of architecture is gathered up in Utopia, in its social dimension and humanities basis at the very least; how a return of the two to the consciousness of architecture and urban design students might be facilitated also constitutes the utopian dimension of my pedagogics.

Part III: Utopian Pedagogies as an Alternative to Degenerate Architecture

In this final section, I will concentrate on both how Utopia informs two of my three main areas of teaching (theory and design) and how it is also, more or less explicitly, their topic as well.

1. Social Mapping—Master Planning: Foundations for the Overcoming of Certainty

The Social Mapping/Master Planning architecture/urban design project at the core of the design studio I formerly led is made up of three interrelated

parts: the eponymous first two, which comprise group work, and Urban Elaborations, which comprises individual work developing upon the earlier components. The two projects are interrelated, and the semester was more or less divided equally between them. The utopian challenge of the project is threefold: to reimagine how preliminary project analysis is mapped, to broaden the horizons of influence on architectural interventions beyond formal considerations alone, to include the social as well, and also to engage the actual inhabitants of the communities studied (social mapping) to inform the invention of projects, from individual buildings (or smaller structures—urban interventions) to the urban scale (master planning), that explicitly take account of the real people living in the neighborhoods being studied.

Although a number of Tyneside neighborhoods in northeast England (on either side of the River Tyne, which separates the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne to the north from Gateshead to the south) were studied during the years when the project ran, in its last iteration, during the 2010–11 academic session, only two (Bensham in Gateshead and Jesmond in Newcastle) were made available to the students to study because it was thought that they crystallized the central pedagogical aims of the class. Bensham is home to the third largest, though still reasonably small, Orthodox Jewish community in Britain, focused around a world-renowned yeshiva (Gateshead Talmudical College) in the neighborhood (Gateshead). Within the cultural landscape of Bensham, which is as surprisingly diverse as it is stubbornly segregated, members of the Haredi Jewish community stand out because of their distinct dress and generally inward-looking closed community organization, which has led to certain tensions in the community, especially in how they are perceived by native-born white British residents (Gateshead Council 2005, 6). There is thus an uneasy tension with some members of the community at large, who feel that the Jewish residents get special treatment from the council, which the inward organization of the Haredi community perhaps stirs up in its neighbors simply by not assimilating.

Thus, the challenge for the students was to make sense of these tensions and propose spatial solutions that could at least become sites of interaction, no matter how unlikely, considering that the Haredi community does what it can to live on a virtual island within Bensham at large. Moreover, although architecture students do not generally come to their subject with a developed critical perspective, the challenge set for them was to become aware of how their own preconceptions tended to shape both their perceptions and their research findings and the degree to which wider perceptions and behaviors

within the community may have been informed by the millennial tradition of European anti-Semitism, including the degree to which their own preconceptions might have been touched by this. Obviously, this was no easy task for most students, the vast majority of whom rose to the occasion nonetheless.

The other neighborhood studied during the last running of the project was Jesmond, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, about a twenty-minute walk north and eastward from Northumbria and Newcastle universities and from the center city shopping district. Jesmond is an older neighborhood, something of an inner suburb, identified with more affluent residents in the city and university staff. It is promoted as “posh” and as something of a pleasure paradise for students. Ultimately, these two conceptions of the neighborhood run into conflict with each other, a condition exacerbated during the past ten years or so as access to university-level education has been expanded, albeit without much of a plan for how to accommodate increasing enrollment (so much so that the much higher tuition fees in England that have come into place with the entering class of 2012–13 could be construed as a belated stopgap response to this lack of a plan).

However, for the purposes of the studio project students were encouraged to examine the growing tensions between those long-term permanent residents who remain in Jesmond and the increasing student population in the community drawn to it because of its proximity to the universities and town shopping and entertainment, as well as the many bars that have opened in Jesmond itself and the ready availability of student apartments, a fair number with between six and nine bedrooms. As Jesmond has been promoted as a student paradise, many students have come to resent permanent residents, going so far as to ask them why they live in a “student neighborhood.” Thus, the greatest challenge for students studying Jesmond, especially for those living in the neighborhood, was to be able to see what the problems were in the first place, especially because the area is promoted as “posh” and thus ostensibly free of the obvious problems associated with less affluent neighborhoods. Some students also had to deal with their own attraction to Jesmond as a student paradise, now ideally suited to the liminal period of the university years, and the running amok identified with it.

It is no accident that the tensions in both Bensham and Jesmond mostly do not lend themselves to obvious architecture or urban design solutions. In fact, this was precisely the point: if architecture education is primarily bound up with the production of attractive images (and developing technical proficiency) characterized by a general disregard for broader social, political,

and economic issues, raising architecture student consciousness, to include a critical-historical perspective including Utopia and the humanities, requires a project type in a location that frustrates institutionalized conceptions of what constitutes a “useful” architecture education exercise. Obviously enough, this is also the Utopian moment of the project as well: only by reaching beyond the easily imaginable, beyond the given, beyond the limits of either generalized professional education or a formalist or aesthetic bent, would it be possible for students to expand their horizons beyond the foreclosure of alternatives in an epoch when capitalism and its mentality seem total.

Facilitating students’ arrival at a (utopian) mental tuning better adapted to imagining the apparently unimaginable turned on a number of paradoxes: for example, although “Social Mapping” and “Master Planning” understandably conjure up anxieties linked to the excesses of orthodox modern architecture and planning (its deterministic, even totalitarian, propensities), the persisting value of both for imagining the just city is advanced in the delivery of the class content and in response to student work, albeit in potentially surprising ways, and in relation to Utopia. The suggested readings for the class, including Martin Buber’s *Paths in Utopia* (1996) and Gianni Vattimo’s “The End of Modernity, the End of the Project?” (1997), establish frameworks for such encounters. To gain a broader understanding of the neighborhood they investigated, students were encouraged to engage with the community in the broadest possible ways and to collate and represent the information gathered from a ground-level standpoint, rather than the alienating habits embedded within the bird’s-eye perspective of plan views.

Although still stylized, the production of digital videos as a way of engaging and mapping communities was introduced. In preparation for the production of these, the project was launched with a day of viewing documentaries preoccupied with developing understandings of a specific neighborhood.³ Although the documentaries were not strictly architectural, the aim was to facilitate students’ sensitization to the way in which individuals and communities make relations to places and appropriate them but also to assist students in gaining a feeling for individuals’ attachments to the built environment. Digital video was embraced as the most effective and efficient means for introducing students to an expanded field of consideration with regard to the invention of architecture, in particular by offering them an alternative to the inevitable alienation of plans (de Certeau 1984).

As they have come to be understood in the postmodern epoch (and as they were practiced in the modern), “Social Mapping” and “Master Planning”

are phrases that at first glance suggest something authoritarian, at the very least suggesting top-down organization and perhaps a panoptic sweep. Under current conditions, both are at best anomalous and at worst retrograde: Given the exceedingly complex tapestry of everyday life, how could any “professional” profess to map the social, and who could have the nerve to claim for themselves the title of “master” of the plan? And yet, in the antithesis of social mapping and master planning—in lieu of the *autogestion* Henri Lefebvre envisioned, which the distorting myths of some “Big Society” seem only to place at an ever further remove (as a kind of pathological Utopia akin to Disney World)—architects, planners, and urban designers must continue to find ways to imagine futures for neighborhoods, villages, towns, and cities that do not descend into the anarchic narcissism of absent planning controls and radically free markets (or the naive determinism of the immediate postwar period [Lefebvre 2009]).

In short, because capitalism inevitably destroys communities and social life within its tentacular reach, inventing some as-yet unimagined, or seemingly unimaginable, alternative must become (again) the vocation of architects, planners, and urban designers (within the ambit of social imagination). Anything else will necessarily remain imprisoned by the given while ensuring its persistence. But social mapping and master planning—albeit unexpectedly in the present context—hold out the possibility of reclaiming influence from the abnegation of responsibility encouraged by the market (which of course is the utopian conviction proposed in the syllabus). (See Appendix A.)

For the project described here, social mapping and master planning have been turned on their heads. Apart from the linguistic (or other forms of) gymnastics this suggests, the intention is radical. Under the cover of a dubious self-proclaimed progressiveness, prophets of nothingness suggest that there is an undeniable correlation between antiplanning, that is, its abdication, and the provision of settings invented by their users. Long ago, such perspectives were called into question during the epoch of abstract orthodox modernist architecture and planning, with its obsession with generalized, not to say generic, space and abstraction (by Henri Lefebvre, Aldo van Eyck, and Herman Hertzberger, for example). The paradox remains: individual and group appropriation (individual and social imagination even) is arguably better nourished by carefully defined settings, made up of articulate elements that establish a field ripe for appropriation as much as for response (the kind of spatial closure David Harvey recognized as a necessary component of a dialectical Utopia [Harvey 2000]).

Beyond the individuals just named above, I am reluctant to identify other adherents of either faction, nondefiners and definers alike, not least because I wish to remain focused on the theoretical aims of the pedagogy underpinning the Social Mapping/Master Planning project but also because I would like to avoid sidelining readers into discussions about built works that apparently best represent the aims of the project described here, which would constitute a form of mental closure. Equally, I am reluctant to include examples of student work from the project, not least because that would suggest that it shared representational finality with conventional architecture studio projects and thus should be judged accordingly. Nevertheless, if readers can accept that the results of the semester's work is ultimately a record of thought experiments rather than fully formed architectural, or urban design, products, there is perhaps some value in including some examples of student work. (See Figures 1, 2, and 3.)

In fact, the Social Mapping/Master Planning project is intentionally open ended, in the belief that the insecurity students experience when confronted by a project organized around a *theoretical aim*, rather than a *formal outcome*, can be profoundly generative, in a potentially utopian sense (inasmuch as the indirectness of the project nudges open perspectives on what would arguably be otherwise unthinkable for the students). And in doing this, the project undermines the typical aims of architecture and urban design education,

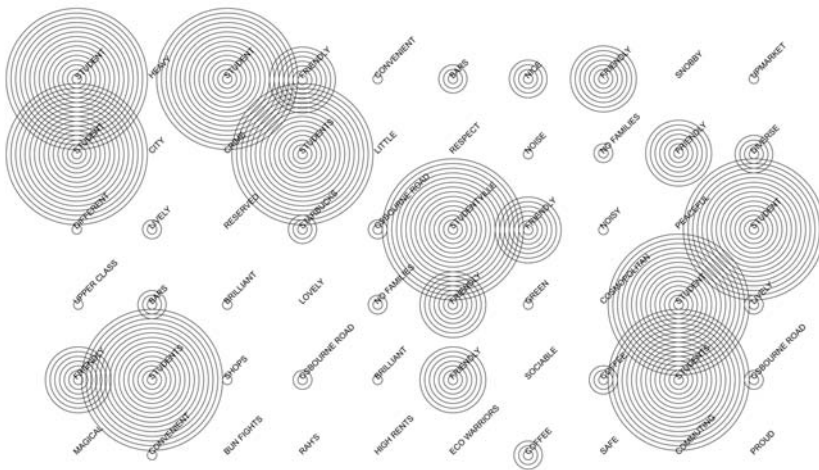


Figure 1. "Conversation Mapping," Jesmond. Group Work: Social Mapping/Master Planning, 2010 (Jesmond Group 2 Students: Cara Rosa Lund, Paul William Maguire, Keir Thomas McNeil, Andrew Morrison).

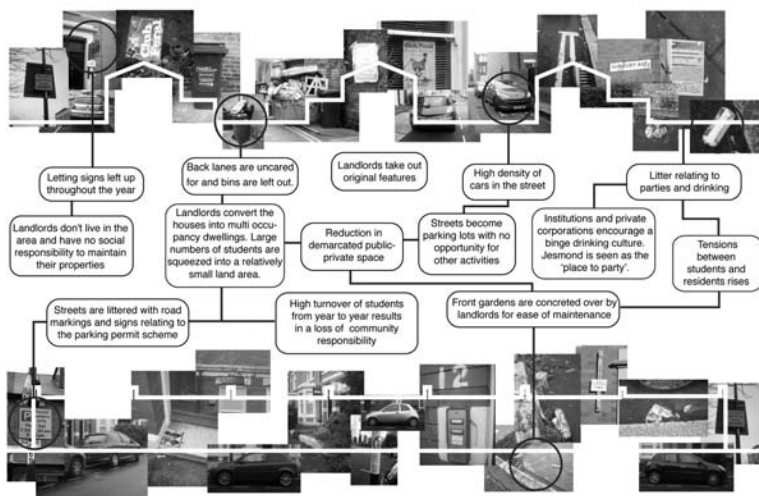


Figure 2. “Street Study,” Jesmond. Group Work: Social Mapping/Master Planning, 2010 (Jesmond Group 2 Students: Cara Rosa Lund, Paul William Maguire, Keir Thomas McNeil, Andrew Morrison).

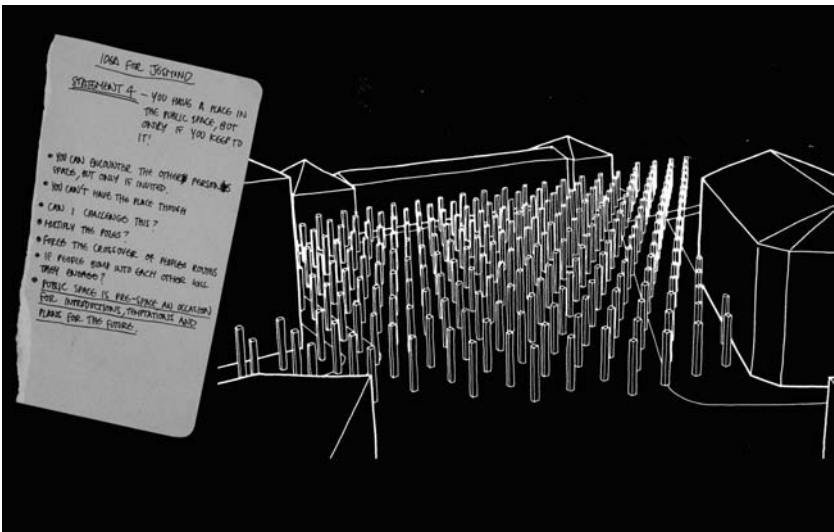


Figure 3. “Jesmond, a Public Space.” Individual Work: Elaborations, 2010 (Student: Paul William Maguire).

entranced as both are with the production of interesting and seductive images above all else. However, this evasiveness is not just self-serving in the apparent cowardice it reveals on the part of the teacher; rather, its primary

aim is procreative, precisely because social mapping and master planning suggest impossible thought experiments that are possible nonetheless.

In this instance, the stubborn retention of social mapping and master planning turns on the conviction that both can continue to offer up possibilities even in an epoch of doubt, with its attendant abdication of social responsibility and ebbing of society. And it is here, I contend, that the whiff of Utopia is most prominent. But despite its by now long-standing role as the straw man of twentieth-century architecture and planning failures (which were admittedly legion), the presence of Utopia in modern architecture and planning is, as suggested earlier, less verifiable than many architecture historians and theorists, including Colin Rowe, would have us believe (Coleman 2005, 2007).

And so, if the scent of Utopia is ascertainable in the project I have been describing here, the argument is that it is far less malodorous than generations of architects and planners have been trained to believe—at the very least, potentially so. Agreeably so as well, because when architects and planners decide to no longer throw up their hands in defeat, having recognized that harboring the belief that the marketplace determines all—as a cover for inaction, in its guise as a poverty of social imagination—is no longer tenable, Utopia can return to enrich and guide that same imagination. But in what form, what sort of Utopia, especially when plans are still instruments of power often enough wielded against those with a less than equal voice or authority?

If I might be indulged for a moment my conviction that to design anything architects need to know much about the people who will appropriate what is offered to them, and that their ability to do so will be easier the more concrete what is on offer is (in the sense of being tangible, both materially and formally), this might be a good time to turn to what sort of mental tuning would be best brought to bear on the social maps and master plans recalcitrant utopian architects and planners might devise and which I have encouraged my students to cultivate.

Although *social mapping* and *master planning* may be questionable terms, my proposal is that they are redeemable if thought through ideas of the city, community, and Utopia offered up by, for example, Martin Buber's conception of "communities of communities" (1996), Henri Lefebvre's (1996, 2008) "critiques of everyday life" and ideas on "the right to the city" and of Utopia as offering a way to imagine a reformed future through a recollected past, David Harvey's (2000) "dialectic utopia," and Fredric Jameson's conviction that "it is difficult enough to imagine any radical political programme

without the conception of systemic otherness, of an alternate society, which only the idea of utopia seems to keep alive" (2004, 36). One way to temper the potential excesses of Utopia—and perhaps also to pacify at least some of its critics—would be to go “walking the city” with Michel de Certeau (1984) but also to keep in mind Gianni Vattimo’s thoughts on the rhetoric of Utopia in the invention of projects as well as his reflections on the possibilities of Utopia, even in the present, in which “the issue becomes one of conceiving a post-metaphysical utopia precisely under the sign of multiplicity asserted as a fundamental value and not just as a phase of ‘confusion’ to be overcome through a process of synthesis, etc” (2006, 22).

In consideration of the links suggested here between social mapping and master planning and between both and Utopia—at least when they are practiced under the “sign of multiplicity . . . as a fundamental value”—whatever lingering suspicion remains of their dubious value as totalizing terms inherited from the height of modernity might be safely set aside to reveal an entirely more nuanced approach, making it possible for architects and planners to chart a return to the work of imagining a just city (Vattimo 2006, 22).

2. Cities and Buildings: Contemporary Issues in Urban Design

The second of the three classes I teach with a decidedly utopian bent is *Cities and Buildings: Contemporary Issues in Urban Design*, which over the years has gone through numerous transformations, finally arriving at its present form only three years ago, after a total of about five or so years of running before then. The form of the class is as important as its content: professional education in the built environment—architecture and urban design—especially in the United Kingdom, operates within a fairly narrow band of reality, in the sense of being focused almost exclusively on the development of skills immediately transferable to professional practice. As such, bigger theoretical questions, in particular social or political ones, often go unanswered because unasked. This is understandable considering the degree to which architecture and urban design (as well as planning) are primarily adjuncts of the much larger building industry, tasked with smoothing the wheels of capitalist development and consumption, by establishing and adorning their preserves. It is with this conception of built environment education and typical practices in mind that I determined that *Cities and Buildings* should have as its primary aim encouraging the persistent questioning of received wisdom about the

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production of cities. Offering students a chance to read and discuss sections of a range of texts on cities and architecture, all of which either explicitly or more implicitly consider Utopia in relation to the human habitat, draws them into an ongoing conversation on what their vocation might actually be, beyond the adornment of capital or the cultivation of technique alone. (See Appendix B for the class syllabus).

Discussion of the readings occurs in two primary ways: each student contributes to a group presentation on a reading selected by the group, followed by an open discussion around the reading led by the students in the group presenting it. In an attempt to encourage students to read the assigned texts and to be prepared for discussion of them, students also produce an individual three hundred-word critical response to five of the nine readings, excluding the one the group they have joined presents. In order to ensure that at least a fair number of students will be able to participate effectively in the conversation, the three hundred-word critical response must be submitted prior to the class session in which the reading responded to is discussed. A third way that conversation continues is by way of my comments to the critical responses, which, as much as possible, take the form of a dialogue with what has been submitted.

The readings for the semester begin with Bruno Taut's 1919 essay "Die Stadtkrone" ("The City Crown" [2009]) introduced at the beginning of this article, as an example of near-Blochian utopianism (despite Bloch's own reservations regarding both Taut and Scheerbart), and ends with sections from *Utopias and Architecture* (Coleman 2005).⁴ Although the principal class readings span nearly ninety years, they jump from 1919 to the 1960s and then proceed nearly decade by decade from then until the present, with some decades, like the 1970s and the 2000s, represented by more than one text.

Although a number of the texts read during the semester in *Cities and Buildings* are overtly utopian, the overall pedagogic aim of the class is to suggest (rather than impose) the possibilities of Utopia as method and as a mindset, or form of mental tuning, that when brought to bear on architecture and urban design projects holds out the promise of resisting the near suffocating dominance over creativity by the building industry, and real estate investment and development in particular, in the invention of place. Although students may well not come away from the class imagining that they can install a fully formed Utopia through their efforts, many confess to leaving with an expanded horizon of possibility, which coincides with their reconsideration of the anti-Utopia position many had earlier uncritically embraced.⁵

To imagine what might be possible inevitably turns on a developing awareness of what *is*. If the given is accepted as the best of all possible worlds (or the only possible world), then Utopia has no purpose. A critical perspective on the ordinarily unobserved context and content of everyday life holds out the only prospect for taking steps beyond its apparently fixed limitations. Distanciation is key, otherwise reproduction or adornment will be the only possibility.

Architects, urban designers, and even planners transact in spatial closure. The character of the spaces they enclose, the character of the enclosures they establish, is the core business of architects and urban designers. Thus, no matter how questionable theories of place may be—such as Marc Augé’s ideas, developed in his *Non-places* (1995), on “anthropological place” as the antithesis of the transient “nonplaces” of “supermodernity”—emphasis on strong positions on the specificity of place challenges students to reflect on the nature of the commodified and consumed environment they inhabit and will almost certainly contribute to expanding. Equally, such reflection raises questions on the inevitability of the encroaching placelessness that is increasingly the pervasive context of globalization, not least by suggesting that there might be alternatives. Elaborating on possibility may indeed be the utopian vocation of architecture and urban design.

As it turns out, as normally practiced, the built environment professions (architecture and urban design in this instance) must inevitably content themselves with designing buildings or larger settings, neighborhoods or town centers, for example, in a manner that is akin to filling the prescriptions of their clients, the ones with the money. Perhaps it has always been thus, but with the capitalistic emphasis on land as more valuable than the buildings and so on that ostensibly improve it, the mutual effort of artist and patron to do their best has long been broken, some notable exceptions notwithstanding (Tafuri 1976). Worth emphasizing here is that although when considered in connection to architecture and the city Utopia is normally cast as “visionary” in the sense of being radically modern, that is, novel to the extreme, consideration of Utopia as proposed by More, on one end of a historical arc, and Lefebvre, for example, on the other, reveals Utopia as decidedly antimodern, or at the very least as suspicious of the unbridled progress usually associated with Utopia, architecture, and the city.

In what follows I will introduce the main assigned readings for the semester by discussing their relevance to my pedagogical aims for the class. However, the order in which I consider them does not correspond exactly with the order in which they are read by the students.

Augé's writing stakes out a position that identifies the limits of modernist and postmodernist rejection of fantasies of permanence. His position is an incremental progression of de Certeau's ideas as presented in "Walking in the City," but Augé is cognizant of the hypermodern developments that define contemporary societies of transience and their settings, adapted to intensified movement, exchange, and consumption. In this way, if Taut proposes a convincing utopian, albeit modernist and universalizing, socialist position in his "City Crown," Rossi charts a countermove, in *The Architecture of the City* (1982), against the certainties and apparent utopianism of high modern approaches to architecture and the city, socialist and capitalist alike. But the danger of Rossi's position, in particular its rejection of Utopia, finds its most thoroughgoing expression in Rowe and Koetter's *Collage City* (1978), which identifies the failures of the city of modern architecture and lays them squarely at the door of Utopia. In short, in the brief arc of time from Taut's "City Crown" to Rowe and Koetter's *Collage City*, the possibilities of the urban environment have gone from ideas on the social and political, bound up with the civic and its architectural expression, manifested powerfully in Taut's "City Crown" as an axis mundi of community, to the museum city of Rowe and Koetter, notable for encouraging cities formed out of "vest pocket utopias." For Rowe and Koetter these would be aesthetically pleasing settings, charting an apparent improvement for being exhibits in a museum city, and designed according to the logic of collage (allowing for things to be used without believing in them). Exhibits of the museum city are displayed as neutrally as possible, all the better for emptying the elements and the whole of any strong social or political content they might have had, relieving them of ideology as much as of Utopia.

If the expanding emptiness advocated in *Collage City* characterizes the blank generation of stylistic postmodernisms in architecture and urban design, since the time of its publication to the present, Rem Koolhaas's audacious recuperation of modernity in his *Delirious New York*, published at the very moment of the decisive rejection of modern architecture and city planning in the late 1970s, is exhilarating, all the more so for his rejection of the social, or socialist, perhaps utopian, pretenses of European modernist architecture of the first third of the twentieth century (see Koolhaas 1994). In their place, Koolhaas embraces the relative moral neutrality of the North American commercial city, making a virtue of its intensification of land use, of its penchant for speculation, overbuilding, and congestion, in particular Manhattan. And yet, Koolhaas's tourist's excitement over midtown Manhattan—the model for his "culture of congestion" and "Manhattanization"—is a

harbinger of the overdevelopment and instant cities of globalization in all of their manifestations but arguably most significantly in tandem with an overwhelming of the urban, paradoxically in the very epoch when more and more people are coming to live in cities.

If Taut is pressed into service to represent the socialist—even utopian—aspirations of early twentieth-century modernist architecture and planning, and Rossi begins to take a stand against the apparent naïveté of Taut and his ilk, Rowe and Koetter promise forms of architecture and urbanism decisively emptied of utopian politics (if not entirely of utopian poetics). And it is this that Koolhaas shares with them and what associates *Delirious New York* with *Collage City*, no matter how much Koolhaas's book and the subsequent practice of his firm, Office for Metropolitan Architecture, appear to recuperate modernity, albeit as a hypermodernity or perhaps a supermodernity. It is precisely this that suggests the readings that follow during the rest of the semester, thematically but chronologically as well. For example, de Certeau's "Walking in the City" is something of a riposte to Koolhaas's cultivation of a "what me worry" attitude to the making of cities. Even so, de Certeau's conviction that citizens, that is, the inhabitants of a city, (re)make it by walking it at once associates his writing with the apparently ethically neutral position adopted by Koolhaas: why worry about the consequences of design if it does not matter anyway or, more to the point, if walkers will rewrite the city anyway, by confounding architects' and planners' attempts to determine or control it?

Paradoxically, de Certeau's confidence in the agency of "walkers" liberates architects to their own proclivities, freeing them from any need to suffer social or political concerns. Most of all, being absolved of the need to care will finally free architects of Utopia. But this was not de Certeau's point. Rather, he accepts the unlikelihood of architects or urban designers attuning their sensibilities to the needs or desires of citizens, which is why walkers must—or at any rate will—subvert the controlling designs of architects and planners to their own requirements, regardless of the frame offered to them. It is this optimism that is the crux of de Certeau's utopianism: a city better suited to its inhabitants always remains a possibility because citizens will continuously appropriate it by walking it. And it is here that the transformative potential of the everyday is revealed, a possibility of little interest to Koolhaas, whose main preoccupation is with intensification, in line, arguably, with the dominant and dominating character of globalization, with its proclivity for opportunism.

In a sense, Augé's instincts are in line with de Certeau's, but his sights are on the sort of intensification—hyper- or supermodernity—that exhilarates Koolhaas. Although Augé may lament the ebbing of the anthropological embeddedness of “places,” he recognizes the increasing dominance of “non-places,” which promise to become the pervasive context of our lives. Perhaps, but he also asserts that the emotional state coterminous with these new conditions is “solitude”: not monk-like retreat as a determined act of resistance but, rather, the ever increasing loneliness that has also come to characterize “supermodernity,” as much as mobility has.

One of the benefits of following a chronological line through the assigned readings is that this particular grouping of texts functions thematically as well as charting the peculiar adventure of Utopia with regard to architecture and urbanism during the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. However critically intentioned the readings may have been when they first appeared, and however much they remain relevant, they can be read retrospectively as fairly transparent reflections of their respective moment, or at least of some of the significant theoretical currents in circulation at the time. However, while time has dated some of the pieces more than others, all of them continue to offer insights into where architecture culture is now and how it got here. Moreover, taken together, the readings form a compelling discourse on architecture and Utopia and the city.

Beyond this, the value of reading Augé and a number of the other texts is to render strange the conditions we inhabit in distraction as though eternally fixed, even if relatively new and thus arguably equally unstable. It is just this that is the utopian prospect of Augé's book; in short, if the current direction of travel is from “places” to “nonplaces,” implicit in this is the possibility of traveling in the opposite direction, conceivably resisting the tendency toward nonplaces. Although this could suggest a degree of morbid nostalgia, it is worth considering just how central “romanticism” is to Lefebvre's radical project and to Utopia in general. In fact, Löwy and Sayre go so far as to argue that “without nostalgia for the past, there can be no dream of an authentic future. In this sense, *utopia will be Romantic or it will not be*” (2001, 255).

If Taut could earnestly imagine Utopia in 1919 as a way of redeeming a broken civilization in the aftermath of World War I, by 1966, when Rossi's *Architecture of the City* was originally published in Italian, the apparent limits of Utopia could not be denied. The banishment of Utopia from architecture that ensued ultimately produced a confusing condition, leaving architects without direction, beyond chasing fashion, a condition exacerbated by the

loss of social imagination, which exited architecture culture alongside the departure of Utopia. By the later 1970s, the emptying out of architecture and urbanism was all but achieved, demonstrated by the enduring influence of Rowe and Koetter's *Collage City*, as well as by the theory and practice of Koolhaas (among many others). And yet, by the 1980s, certain aspects of philosophical postmodernism (in contradistinction to stylistic postmodernism in architecture and urban design), which had been emerging since the late 1950s, contributed to sharpening attempts to reenchant the world, or at least made significant contributions to developing understandings of why it is so difficult to do so, which is why de Certeau's and Augé's thinking, for example, is of continuing relevance. By the same token, it is no wonder that with the approach of the millennium, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, Utopia became relevant once more, albeit in a persistently marginalized position.

The dominance of the neoliberal perspective as the only alternative through the 1990s and into the new century faced little resistance from almost any quarter, and yet the built environment has been little improved by the long economic boom preceding the bust in 2008 and the continuing downturn. But austerity and neoliberal dreams of ever expanding marketization, in tandem with contracting consciousness, have begun to renew Utopia's fortunes as perhaps the only method for even imagining how one might begin to construe alternatives, no matter how overwhelmed such efforts might be by the capital realist cultural dominant. Nevertheless, an encouraging number of students born into a post-Berlin Wall world, in which no alternative system exists, no matter how dubious the current one might be, do evidence a desire to learn how they might imagine alternatives. With this in mind, it is no wonder that the last three readings of the semester evidence—to varying degrees—a more explicitly recuperated conception of Utopia. Rykwert's *Seduction of Place* (2002), originally published in 2000, encourages not so much resistance—*being against*—as optimism—*being for*. According to Rykwert, only if we as citizens demand the city we want will there be any chance of our getting it from those charged with providing it, which is the utopian crux of his book.

Not surprisingly, Rykwert's is a rather dissonant message for students engaged in a professional education that propagates myths of professional authority over the built environment and an even more doubtful influence over its possible reform and improvement. However, it is just such discordance with authorial fantasies of authority and agency that holds out the

promise of students cultivating capacities for reimagining more meaningful practices on their own. To my mind, this is also an example of how Utopia is both the subject and the object of the class.

The penultimate reading, David Harvey's *Spaces of Hope* (2000), seems to me to be a geographer's counterpart to Rykwert's urban history and theories of possibility for the city in the twenty-first century. Intriguing in a consideration of these two works is observing how much they share in terms of imagining "just" cities and the intermingling of politics, society, and space. What separates them, however, is Rykwert's greater confidence in describing the forms settings might take, as compared with Harvey's greater confidence in outlining the social processes that might result in improved environments, imagined by way of Utopia.

3. From the "Insurgent Architect" to the "Unthinkability of Utopia"

If Rykwert posits revitalized citizens as the last best hope for the good city, David Harvey's project is to imagine how such a city could be imagined and by whom, before presupposing the existence of reactivated citizens. In a sense, the main aim of Harvey's *Spaces of Hope* (2000) is to conceptualize an agent who can act against the *given* to supersede it while at the same time learning how to achieve this from within the very system that creates what *is* and appears to ensure its permanent survival. Harvey's book arguably follows Rykwert's thematically by beginning to model for students the possible shapes renewed habits of practice might take, to achieve, or at least work toward, what Harvey calls a "dialectical utopia," made out of the "spatial closure" of architectural utopias and the "social processes" of reform, as a way to counterbalance the shortcomings of both: the political naïveté of the first and the resistance to closure of the second.

For Harvey, the figure of the "architect" and that of the "insurgent" are key operatives in changing the world. In this instance, "architect" is less the familiar professional figure of one who designs buildings and organizes their construction. Rather, Harvey's use of *architect* seems to me to be closer to the architect as "superintendent of works," as opposed to either "master carpenter" or "master builder." The figure of the "insurgent" attempts to negotiate constraints while simultaneously imagining ways to outmaneuver them. The "architect" must marry dissatisfaction to rebelliousness within a mutinous frame, a dynamic modus suggested by the "dialectical"

utopian method Harvey recommends, which “permits diverse knowledges and practices to be rendered coherent across scales without resort to some narrow causal reductionism” (2000, 233–34). According to Harvey, if architectural utopias inevitably emphasize setting and “the private pursuit of individual advantage,” “traditional utopianism . . . gives precedence . . . to citizenship, to collective identification and responsibilities” (2000, 239). Ultimately, the “dialectical utopianism” Harvey argues for is *spatial* as well as *temporal*, drawing upon the parallel radical traditions of architecture, literary utopias, and communitarianism.

While Harvey’s insight might appear deceptively obvious, architects and urban designers so often emphasize *space* over *time* (spatial closure over social process) that the insistence that the two must be linked across x- and y-axes is indeed radical. It is with this in mind that Harvey argues that “any aspiring insurgent architect must learn, in association with others, to collate and combine action on all fronts” (2000, 253).

The comprehensiveness of the method Harvey proposes suggests how architecture and urban design practices might become less limited and restrictive and more expansive. In most instances practice requires that the full complexity of building problems or the problem of the city must be reduced to some apparently manageable, though severely limited, fragment of its totality. It is in this regard that the contribution the Harvey reading makes to students reflecting on the realities of architecture and urban design practice in the present climate, and how alternatives could be imagined, is invaluable.

The most ambitious aspect of Harvey’s study is his attempt to reconcile the apparently conflicting traditions of so-called architectural utopias with literary utopias and utopian socialism. If utopian projection in architecture has come to be suspect because of its dubious association with the failures of orthodox modern architecture, Harvey begins to rehabilitate this tradition by arguing that although architects, even those with utopian aspirations, inevitably become “a cog in the wheel of capitalist urbanization, . . . the architect can (indeed must) desire, think and dream of difference” (2000, 237). It is this vocation for imagining difference and the architect’s special speculative and critical capacities with regard to enclosed spaces (interior and exterior alike) as settings for alternative social arrangements that the set of readings for this class aims to assist students in recollecting.

In its comprehensive conception of the spatiotemporal possible environments that could become settings for hope and difference, Harvey’s

chapter brings together many of the strands introduced during the semester, but still not from the perspective or practical experience of either an architect or an urban designer. Although it is sure that much of the most imaginative writing on architecture and the city today comes from beyond the disciplines of architecture and urban design, as an educator in a professional school, my conviction is that there is still real value in attempting to make the case for alternatives, to win the argument for Utopia, from *within* architecture and urban design, rather than immediately looking beyond it for guidance. It is with this, perhaps utopian conviction about disciplines that the semester's reading concludes with selections from my own *Utopias and Architecture* (2005), which not only explicitly considers the problematic of architecture and Utopia but does so from within Utopian studies and architecture and urban design simultaneously. The main aim of the book, and also the reason for assigning selections from it to students, is to encourage readers to imagine how Utopia might aid them in thinking architecture and the city beyond the limits of the given.

4. Utopias and Architecture

Although I would have liked to have included student responses for all of the texts, space limitations make it impossible to do so. In the event, I have determined that it would be most revealing and thus useful to include three of the three hundred-word critical responses to *Utopias and Architecture* produced by students in the 2010–11 academic session. The first is as follows:

Coleman presents an optimistic utopia based on the human body, social imagination and renewal that is gradually represented through architecture that is responsive to social life. These notions along with the clarity of the text, pinpointing links and parallelisms between modernism and current practice, better convey the timeless qualities of the humanist utopia.

The relationship between social imagination and the [. . .] [possible] responsiveness [of architecture] to social life has been professed by many, including Alberti. . . . Furthermore, Coleman effectively links de Certeau's idea regarding the way social life gives

rise to . . . meaning and association . . . [with] a place . . . [with] Rykwert's emphasis . . . [on] meaningful places as . . . [intrinsic] to the architect's duty to positively transform society.

Reform and renewal have been a cause and/or key theme in [the] utopian essays [we have read], however there are various contrasting views regarding . . . political aspect[s] of utopia. Rowe negated the transformation[al] aspect of architecture whilst Koolhaas admits only a capitalist driven transformation. Through Rossi the issue of inequality is explored, as he states that architecture reflects the ideals of institutions and the ruling class, and questions the success of the alternative city organization proposals or revolution. This is where the case studies chosen by Coleman become critical . . . [for] understanding . . . how institutions can be made more humane. Compared to Rossi and Rowe's regulating and imposing institutions, the optimistic utopias adopted in Coleman's case studies transform these into places of self-acknowledgement.

Through the understanding and superimposition of the various concepts behind the humanist utopia, Coleman provides a deep insight as to how notions dating back centuries are still fully applicable if . . . [deployed] in ways that are responsive to the social, geographical and political context in which they exist. (Sarah Muscat, student, submitted electronically, May 2, 2011)

The virtue of the three hundred-word critical responses is that they help students to focus their reading of the set of texts but also make it much easier for them to participate in the discussion following the group presentation on the reading for that week. Requiring the critical response also sharpens many students' capacity for challenging their own assumptions, those of the presenters, and the teacher's as well. The following is another of the critical responses to the final reading, which also helps to review the main themes of the module:

Despite the traditional discomfort with utopian [visions] (often associated with the failures of modernism and oppressive regimes), Coleman highlights the evidential role of utopian visions in realising exemplary architectural practice. Here utopianism is considered to be the very element that gives . . . the work of the

architect [its humanistic aspect], ensuring they do not merely act as scientific agents or puppets of capitalism. However, Coleman's unique quality lays in the consideration of the "unthinkability" of the utopian dimension of architecture, which allows the visionary motivation to flourish without being suppressed or eliminated by the technical, market driven nature of post-modern architectural practice.

In view of the differing approaches explored thus far, Coleman provides a fresh consideration of the role of utopia as something that should be embraced yet not forced. In contrast to Harvey, Coleman does not call for the explicit use of utopia as a guide to good or transformative practice; rather, the role of utopian visions as inexplicit guiding principles and rhetoric should be embraced, not dismissed or feared.

Like Rykwert, Coleman emphasizes the configurative nature of architecture and the importance of continuous development based upon localized action making up parts within a wider whole. Emphasis upon the local and universal scales remains especially prevalent within the more recent texts (Harvey for example) signifying a current . . . within architectural theory . . . dismissive of prescriptive and aesthetically driven practice, and one which encourages localized projects that give form to social life through visions of positive transformation and recuperation (therefore, inherently utopian).

Optimistically, Coleman considers the power of utopian visions in creating progressive *places* that allow for positive social experience and which respond to their social, historic and geographical context, rather than being driven by the market—those places desired explicitly by both Rykwert and Harvey, and to some degree de Certeau. (Cassandra Walker, student, submitted electronically, May 10, 2011)

As with the previous critical response, the one above appears to demonstrate an understanding of both the substance of the specific reading and the overall aims of the class more generally. However, it is intriguing to consider whether the emphasis on the "inexplicit" above is a misreading or evidences some persisting discomfort with Utopia. The idea of Utopia as method, as having

an active role in the imagining of buildings and cities, resists ready embrace, no doubt because of the negative view that continues to stick to it. As such Utopia may necessarily need to remain inexplicit, which is acceptable, so long as it can inform methods of practice.

One last critical response to the final reading for the class may help to further clarify my pedagogical aims for the class, as well as how students receive and interpret these:

Clearly, without reaching to propositional truth, as Heidegger posited, one cannot go beyond matter-of-factness which can represent only the matter-of-factness of now. However, also, we are aware of the pathological tendency of utopianism, in which the fixed idea of singular utopia becomes totalitarian and, at the same time, impotence, as Rowe noted. Coleman explores how to conceive a working project which can keep [Utopia] alive in facilitating thoughts and practices on social transformation and, simultaneously, avoid becoming fixed despite . . . its inherent pathological tendency. Coleman attempts to extract frames of thought . . . from . . . past exemplary architectural practices, in which the relation between the formal and the social can be actively dealt with.

It can be said that all of each theoretical work [we have read,] of Taut's, Rossi's, Rowe's, Koolhaas's and Coleman's have been attempting to reposition or reinvent "Architecture" in the apparent manifestation of ongoing [crises] in the different situations of the dialectic of modernization; while de Certeau [and] Augé have been attempting to see and show the lived city. In this constellation of ideas and practices, the notion of utopia and utopian thinking (as in how to think or not to think utopias) has been the main coordinate axis.

Differences between the attempts of repositioning "Architecture" can be looked at through what [has] been suggested as [the] impetus of the "repositioning." Rowe suggested differentiating utopian politics and utopian poetics, and saving the [latter] only. Koolhaas starts from the clear domain of [the] architectural profession for surfing the force of modernization in order to resist the retreat of architecture. Coleman posits thinking the "unthinkability of utopia" as [an] impetus to establish [a] meaningful existence of "architecture," not

[a] “strong profession” of architects . . . in the society. The paradox, which is somehow workable, [is] utopian thinking is shown as driving force rather than a problem that should be eliminated. (Jun S. Lee, student, submitted electronically, May 10, 2011)

What I especially like about this response is the degree to which it reveals the student’s own thinking through a consideration of the thought of others. However, the response raises difficult and persisting questions about the attempt to retheorize Utopia for architecture that the student has incisively observed. Does what the class and set readings propose have the makings of a method? Or is it just a futile attempt to rescue Utopia from its inevitable fate? And which is the more utopian of the two?

5. Toward Utopia as Method for Architecture and Urban Design

Although many, if not most, urban design and architecture students harbor some desire for their work to have a large degree of social relevance, the intense level of production demanded by the education, and more so by professional practice, conspires to thwart this intuition, as does the overabundant appeal of seductive images, which is rewarded most inside and outside of the academy. If nothing else, my pedagogy is bound up with a conviction that the greatest contribution I can make to the education of my students resides in offering them a safe space where they can expand their own horizons of possibility by exploring how they might challenge the restriction on doing so that characterizes the project of professional education in architecture and urban design, as well as the professional practice of both awaiting students beyond graduation.

Crucially, the idea of possibility that is the currency of my teaching is not to be confused with visionary novelty or artistic willfulness. Rather, “possibility” in the context of my pedagogy is always of a utopian sort and as such profoundly concerned with the social and political dimensions of architecture and the city, primarily as regards imagining how the apparent dominance of a “there is no alternative” mind-set might be subverted to reveal the nonsense of such a conviction.

This article is not about school buildings or about how the architecture of schools might in some way harbor utopian aspirations equally manifest in

the physical reality of the educational setting, in how that setting is occupied, or in the curriculum performed and elaborated on by teachers and students together. Rather, the educational tactics discussed here and deployed in my teaching are conceptualized as subversive, if not heretical, vis-à-vis architecture and urban design education. In this way, what has been presented here differs in character and intent from the expanding literature on hope and education, which reasonably enough associates hope with utopian longing. However, much of the literature on hope and education, which primarily emerges from within academic disciplines engaged with the study of theories and philosophies of education, attempts a systematic reworking of educational practices and settings that is far more strategic than tactical and as such reveals aspirations that are less subversive than totalizing. In this way, the idea of Utopia, or the Utopias proposed, risks tending toward the excesses of *bad* Utopias of the totalizing sort. In short, this article emerges out of an acceptance of the pedagogies of Utopia as provisional, short-lived, and always under threat of eradication by the dominant forces at play within the contexts in which they must unavoidably operate, which inevitably tend toward stasis and conservation of the status quo or the propagation of self-soothing myths of professional agency. In light of this, the utopian education and the education in Utopia presented here involves a recollection of one possible way of attempting to show the relevance of Utopia for thinking beyond the limits of the given in architecture and urban design. As such, it has not been the aim here to suggest the applicability of the approach outlined in any other context or to assess its certain efficacy if delivered by others. The provisional, fugitive, even rogue nature of what has been presented here is perhaps evidence of its own nonconformist radicality, which is its utopian vocation. The value of modeling this vocation for students, and inviting them to adopt it for themselves, does not reside in its status as a *blueprint* for direct reapplication anywhere but, rather, as a *model* of utopian possibility open to renewal that must be interpreted in each situation—even betrayed—to remain vital.

Finally, the approach suggested here does not depend on, or require, a fine or worthy setting to be enacted. In fact, a key aspect of the utopianism of the pedagogy introduced here is that it can take place under the most unpropitious conditions and in the most unpromising settings, which serves to model for students how alternatives to conditions as they are can be imagined beyond the apparent totalizing limitations of the present.

Appendix A: Social Mapping/Master Planning Short Description, Including Reading List

Introduction to Semester Themes

Semester 1 is concerned with urban design and is split between team-based and individual project work. The three components of the module focus on the study of ideas of the city, urban design analysis, and the generation of design proposals for an area of Tyneside. The first half of the semester involves group work and will engage architecture students in a creative dialogue with preconceptions of the city. Emphasis is on developing an ability to “read the city” in a variety of ways and to develop from these analyses a range of positive future scenarios for the area of study together with design proposals that would help to bring about the imagined transformations.

Overall, the theme of the semester is to identify adequacies and inadequacies in the multiple aspects of urban settings. Following on from this, students are challenged to develop strategies for projecting schemes that strengthen adequacies while redressing inadequacies. In the context of this semester, local residents are considered the primary sources for gathering intelligence about existing conditions and desirable outcomes. This working method for gathering information about a specific neighborhood allows students to gain access to unfettered thinking about schools, other institutions and uses, housing, and public spaces to develop a range of strategies and tactics for rethinking the aims and objectives of urban regeneration.

Components of the Semester: How We Live

- *Social Mapping—Reading the City*: a brief linked research project produced by small groups of architecture students. Research completed for this project should challenge the ways architects, planners, urban designers, and developers conventionally *map* existing conditions, including how such findings are normally applied (or not) to actual design work. This work will include close observation, interviews, indexing vitality, and potentially some statistical analysis to develop an overview of the social

context of the neighborhood studied, particularly through observational surveying, including visual and textual note taking, and interaction with as varied a range of inhabitants as possible.

- The objective of this semester is to challenge students' preconceptions of neighborhood conditions, especially with regard to how to *map* urban situations and effectively apply one's findings to a design. In this instance, actual residents are viewed as the best informants that architects, planners, or urban designers can turn to when projecting schemes for neighborhood renewal.
- *Master Planning—Reconfiguring the City*: As part of the first project, groups will be required to synthesize the variety of data they have collected during their research. The main objective of this part of the Social Mapping/Master Planning project is to devise the first steps toward a master plan for the neighborhood each group has studied. Emphasis is on developing considerate interventions demonstrating significant awareness of the actual concerns of real inhabitants as well as the actual conditions of the neighborhood examined. Not only will students have to negotiate differences within their own working group; all are encouraged also to imagine how their schemes might be evaluated by the nonspecialist residents who would occupy them, if the projects were actually constructed. All members of each group should think of this as a time for reflection but also for projection.
- *Elaborations*: As part of the final presentation for this semester, individual students are challenged to develop in much greater detail a small-scale proposal for some location in the group's Social Mapping/Master Planning neighborhood. This work should clearly demonstrate how what is proposed derives from the earlier research as well as showing how it is a tangible response to these findings in the form of a preferable alternative. The specific role of architecture and urban design for the development of the solution should be made explicit. Students should note that all members of each group will be required to work from the same brief developed by their group. In this way, it will be possible to evaluate the relative merits of multiple solutions to the same problem. All briefs must also be approved by the individual tutors. (More information to follow.)
- *Project Duration*: November 8–December 12

Readings Available Online

- Benton, Tim, "Scatology, Eschatology, and the Modern Movement," *Harvard Design Magazine*, Housing and Community no. 8 (Summer 1999). www.gsd.harvard.edu/research/publications/hdm/back/8benton.html.
- Bollas, Christopher, "Architecture and the Unconscious," *International Forum of Psychoanalysis* 9, nos. 1–2 (July 2000): 28–42. www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a713797213.
- Coleman, Nathaniel, "History, Theory, Design: A Pedagogy of Persuasion," *ARQ (Architecture Research Quarterly)* 7, nos. 3–4 (2003): 353–60. www.journals.cup.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=246304&jid=ARQ&volumeId=7&issueId=3-4&aid=246303.
- Coleman, Nathaniel, "The Limits of Professional Architectural Education," *JADE: International Journal of Art and Design Education* 29, no. 2 (2010): 200–212. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1476-8070.2010.01643.x/pdf>.
- Debord, Guy, *The Society of Spectacle* (1967). www.marxists.org/reference/archive/debord/society.htm.
- Fishman, Robert, "Beyond Utopia: Urbanism After the End of Cities." <http://urban.cccb.org/urbanLibrary/htmlDbDocs/A004-C.html>.
- Foucault, Michel, "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias," 1967. <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>.
- Harvey, David, "Possible Urban Worlds," Forth Megacities Lecture: November 16, 2000, especially 62–80, 111–18. www.megacities.nl/lecture_4/invitation.html.
- Levitas, Ruth, "On Dialectical Utopianism" (book review of D. Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*), *History of the Human Sciences* 16 (2003): 137–50. <http://hhs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/16/1/137>.
- McChesney, Robert W., "Noam Chomsky and the Struggle Against Neoliberalism," *Monthly Review*, April 1, 1999. www.chomsky.info/onchomsky/19990401.htm.
- Rykwert, Joseph, "Do We Want to Be Citizens or Consumers." <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/TECH/science/06/12/Rykwert/index.html>.
- Wood, David, book review: D. Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, *Progress in Human Geography*, 2001: 25, 326. <http://phg.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/25/2/32>.

Reading List for Social Mapping/Master Planning and Elaborations

- Andreotti, Libero, and Xavier Costa, eds., *Theory of the Dérive and Other Situationist Writings on the City* (Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 1996).
- Augé, Marc, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso Books, 1995).
- Barnett, J., *Redesigning Cities: Principals, Practice, and Implementation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

- Boyer, M. Christine, *The City of Collective Memory* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).
- Buber, Martin, *Paths in Utopia* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), vii, 1–23, 58–149.
- Celik, Zeynep, Diane Favro, and Richard Ingersoll, eds., *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space*, foreword by Spiro Kostof (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).
- Choay, Francoise, *Modern City: Planning in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: George Braziller, 1969).
- Coleman, Nathaniel, "Siting Lives: Postwar Place-Making," in *Constructing Place*, ed. S. Menin (London: Routledge, 2003), 205–16.
- Coleman, Nathaniel, "Social Mapping," in *EUROSCAPE* (Gateshead: Gateshead City Council, Portcullis Press, 2006), 32–33.
- Coleman, Nathaniel, *Utopias and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2005).
- Coleman, Nathaniel, "Words of Desire: Envisaging Architecture," *Interfaces: Image, Texte, Language* 24 (2004): Text and Architecture, 183–99.
- Frampton, K., *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).
- Harries, K., *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998).
- Leach, Neil, ed., *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997).
- Leatherbarrow, David, *Uncommon Ground: Architecture, Technology, and Topography* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000).
- Lefebvre, Henri, *Writings on Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).
- Minton, Anna, "Part One: The City," in *Ground Control: Fear and Happiness in the Twenty-First-Century City* (London: Penguin, 2009), 3–58.
- Nesbitt, Kate, ed., *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965–1995* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996).
- Ockman, Joan, ed., with Edward Eigen, *Architecture Culture: 1943–1968* (New York: Columbia Books of Architecture/Rizzoli, 1993).
- Pérez-Gómez, Alberto, *Built upon Love: Architectural Longing After Ethics and Aesthetics* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).
- Rykwert, J., *The Seduction of Place: The History and Future of the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- Sargent, Lyman Tower, "Introduction," "Good Places and Bad Places," "Utopian Practice," in *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1–49.
- Sennett, Richard, *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2003).
- Sennett, Richard, *The Fall of Public Man* (London: Penguin, 2003).
- Vattimo, Gianni, "The End of Modernity, the End of the Project?" in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (London: Routledge, 1997), 140–47.
- Vesely, Dalibor, *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation: The Question of Creativity in the Shadow of Production* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004).

Appendix B: Cities and Buildings: Contemporary Issues in Urban Design Reading Lists

Preliminary Readings

- Coleman, Nathaniel. "Introduction: Architecture and Utopia." In *Imagining and Making the World: Reconsidering Architecture and Utopia*, ed. N. Coleman, 1–25. Bern: Peter Lang, 2011.
- George, R. Varkki. "A Procedural Explanation for Contemporary Urban Design." *Journal of Urban Design* 2, no. 2 (1997): 143–61.
- Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias." 1967. <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>.
- Krieger, Alex. "Territories of Urban Design." February 2004. <http://chankrieger.com/profile/essays/territoriesofud.pdf>.
- Rowley, Alan. "Private-Property Decision Makers and the Quality of Urban Design." *Journal of Urban Design* 3, no. 2 (1998): 151–73.
- Schurch, Thomas W. "Reconsidering Urban Design: Thoughts About Its Definition and Status as a Field or Profession." *Journal of Urban Design* 4, no. 1 (1999): 5–28.
- Sternberg, Ernest. "An Integrative Theory of Urban Design." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 66, no. 3 (2000): 265–78.

Class Reading List

- Andreotti, Libero, and Xavier Costa, eds., *Theory of the Dérive and Other Situationist Writings on the City*. Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, 1996.
- Augé, Marc, *Non-places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*. London: Verso Books, 1995. Assigned Chapter:
- "From Places to Non-places"
- Barnett, J., *Redesigning Cities: Principals, Practice, and Implementation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Boyer, M. Christine, *The City of Collective Memory*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996.
- Choay, Françoise, *Modern City: Planning in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: George Braziller, 1969.
- Coleman, Nathaniel, ed., *Imagining and Making the World: Reconsidering Architecture and Utopia*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2011. Assigned Chapters:
- N. Coleman, "Utopia on Trial?"
 - N. Coleman, R. Levitas, and L. T. Sargent, "Dialogue"
 - U. Ersoy, "To See Daydreams: The Glass Utopia of Paul Scheerbart and Bruno Taut"
 - D. Haney, "Spaces of Resistance and Compromise: The Concrete Utopia Realized"
 - M. Miles, "An Orderly Life: Ildefons Cerdà and the Northern Extension of Barcelona"
 - V. Narayana, "Du Génie en Utopie: The Figure of the Engineer in Balzacian and Zollian Utopias"

- J. Powers, "Building Utopia: The Status of the Ideal in Filarete's Trattato"
- E. Sullivan, "Drawing Blood: Patrick Geddes's Sectional Thinking"
- P. E. Wegner, "'The Mysterious Qualities of the Alleged Void': Transvaluation and Utopian Urbanism in Rem Koolhaas's *S,M,L,XL*"

Coleman, Nathaniel, *Utopias and Architecture*. Abingdon, England: Routledge, 2005.

Assigned Chapters:

- "Architecture and Orientation"
- "The Unthinkability of Utopia"

Celik, Zeynep, Diane Favro, and Richard Ingersoll, eds., *Streets: Critical Perspectives on Public Space*. Foreword by Spiro Kostof. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

de Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. 1980. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. Assigned Chapter:

- "Walking the City"

Harvey, David, *Spaces of Hope*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. Assigned Chapter:

- "The Insurgent Architect at Work"

Koolhaas, Rem, *Delirious New York*. 1978. New York: Monacelli, 1994. Assigned Chapter:

- "How Perfect Perfection Can Be: The Creation of Rockefeller Center"

Lefebvre, Henri, *Writings on Cities*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

Rossi, Aldo, *The Architecture of the City*. 1966. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982. Assigned Chapters:

- "Urban Artifacts and a Theory of the City"
- "The Evolution of Urban Artifacts"

Rowe, Colin, and Fred Koetter, *Collage City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978. Assigned Chapter:

- "Collage City and the Reconquest of Time"

Rykwert, J., *The Seduction of Place*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Assigned Chapters:

- "For the New Millennium?"
- "Afterword"

Sennett, Richard, *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Sennett, Richard, *The Fall of Public Man*. London: Penguin, 2003.

Taut, Bruno, "The City Crown." 1919. Trans. Ulrike Altenmüller and Matthew Mindrup. *Journal of Architectural Education* 63, no. 1 (2009): 121–34.

Venturi, Robert, Steven Izenour, and Denise Scott Brown, *Learning from Las Vegas*, rev. ed. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977.

Notes

1. Along with Borsi's book, Ruth Eaton's *Ideal Cities* (2001) and Gregory Claeys's *Searching for Utopia* (2011) also include descriptions of architectural and city designs as utopian that make it all but impossible to see them as such.

2. Even when utopianism is supposedly embraced in architecture (education and practice), it usually takes a form that is in many ways analogous to the shape it is given in contemporary education theory. As Darren Webb has observed, “Paradoxically, what each ‘utopian’ approach to education lacks is a utopian vision. This is partly explained by the caution and hesitancy accompanying the *rapprochement* with utopia, the lingering reluctance to offer ‘closed’ or ‘totalising’ blueprints. This reluctance, however, has debilitating consequences. For without substantive, normative representation. Utopia is unable to perform the functions ascribed to it. . . . Without an explicit, value-based sense of ‘what is right,’ the utopian educator’s capacity to teach, guide, direct and redirect is fatally compromised” (2009, 744–45).

3. The DVDs viewed included three films considering 7th Street in New York City’s East Village, each from a distinctly different perspective. Also viewed were a film on Bensham itself and a short film presented by Daniel Libeskind on the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin (before it was redeveloped), among a few others.

4. It is worth noting that Taut’s essay received its first English translation only as late as 2009. I should also note that all students in the class are expected to have read a number of background readings before the first session. These background readings have been selected to give the students a sense of contemporary academic writing on urban design (planning and architecture) and also to give everyone in the class at least something of a shared foundation of knowledge on the topics covered.

5. Along these lines, one former student described the class for subsequent students as follows: “Think of the module as a way of developing (or challenging) your own, personal ideological stance on urban design practice and as a chance and space to really think and discuss the ideas and beliefs behind the way we develop buildings and cities. . . . Coleman is after a critical response rather than a summary of the text but it doesn’t have to be overly academic. Be thoughtful but don’t be afraid to say what you think, be passionate, speak with you own voice. Get lots of political and social context into your presentation” (Lowri Bond, former student, “Brace Yourselves, It’s Cities and Buildings . . .,” *Urban Design Blog*, accessed July 1, 2012, www.nclurbanandesign.org/module-stuff/brace-yourselves-its-cities-and-buildings/).

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- Borsi, Franco. *Architecture and Utopia*. Trans. Deke Dusinberre. Paris: Hazan, 1997.
- Buber, Martin. *Paths in Utopia*. 1949. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996.
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- de Certeau, Michel. "Walking in the City." 1980. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall, 91–110. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Eaton, Ruth. *Ideal Cities: Utopianism and the (Un)Built Environment*. Antwerp: Mercatorfonds, 2001.
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- Serenyi, Peter. "Le Corbusier, Fourier, and the Monastery of Ema." *Art Bulletin* 49 (1967): 277–86.
- Smith, Mick. "Repetition and Difference: Lefebvre, Le Corbusier, and Modernity's (Im)Moral Landscape." *Ethics, Place, and Environment* 4, no. 1 (2001): 31–44.
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