


# Revisiting the encounters of the social concern with the utopian aspirations: is pragmatist imagination or utopian realism the way to follow?

**Conference Paper**

**Author(s):**

Charitonidou, Marianna 

**Publication date:**

2014-06

**Permanent link:**

<https://doi.org/10.3929/ethz-b-000494391>

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EDITA: critic|all PRESS.

ISBN: 978-84-697-0424-0

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Atribución-NoComercial-SinDerivadas 2.5 Genérica.

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I International Conference  
on Architectural Design & Criticism  
Madrid 12-14 June 2014

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## Revisando los encuentros de la preocupación social con las aspiraciones utópicas: es la imaginación pragmática o realismo utópico el camino a seguir?

Charitonidou, Marianna<sup>1</sup>

1. National Technical University of Athens, School of Architecture, Athens, Greece, charitonidou@aschool.ac.uk

### Resumen

En el estado actual de la arquitectura algunos historiadores y teóricos de la arquitectura se refieren a una necesidad de volver al pensamiento y la práctica utópica. El objetivo es hacer frente a una serie de preguntas y problemáticas que han surgido a lo largo de la historia en que el pensamiento utópico, como se deriva de los géneros literarios y filosóficos, se ha especializado por arquitectos y urbanistas. Una gran parte de los historiadores y teóricos de la arquitectura se refieren a una crisis de representación que implica el fracaso de los edificios para llevar significado cultural confiable. La cuestión de la utopía siempre ha sido una herramienta para la crítica social. A mediados del 1970 algunos arquitectos como Robert Venturi y Denise Scott Brown estaban rechazando activamente utopías modernistas. Jameson lamenta claramente el abandono de la arquitectura postmoderna de las dos utopías políticas y estéticas. Por otra parte, Fredric Jameson problemáticas se centran en las razones por las que la imaginación utópica vale la pena luchar y disociar del totalitarismo. Manfredo Tafuri en su libro *Progetto e Utopia* se refiere a la relación entre la semiología y el formalismo argumentando que el intento de revitalizar la arquitectura por medio de una exploración de su estructura interna aparece como una manera de descubrir un posible papel de vanguardia para la arquitectura. A través de la semiología arquitectura busca su propio significado. El compromiso de Tafuri con la actual aborda la producción arquitectónica contemporánea en su relación con el modernismo y el capitalismo. La intención es describir las formas en que el concepto de ideología ha afectado las clasificaciones en la "historiografía" contemporánea de la arquitectura. El término "historiografía" denota el total de las historias escritas sobre un periodo cronológico específico o sobre una unidad temática concreta. Un enfoque pragmático a la arquitectura implicaría una reorientación de las energías intelectuales en las complejas realidades de los entornos construidos. En lo que concierne como el intercambio entre pragmatismo y utopismo está preocupado Reinhold Martin desarrolla un discurso teórico que pretende reconciliar los aspectos pragmáticos y aspiraciones utópicas y disolver las fronteras entre estos dos enfoques. Según Reinhold Martin la polémica "post-crítico" es un esfuerzo por enterrar las visiones utópicas de la política de los años 1960. Reinhold Martin argumenta que utopía es un fantasma que infunde la realidad cotidiana con otros mundos posibles y utiliza el término "realismo utópico" para describir la empresa que está destinada a superarlas restricciones del pragmatismo post-utópico.

**Palabras clave:** utopía, ideología, semiología, historiografía, pragmatismo.

## Revisiting the encounters of the social concern with the utopian aspirations: is pragmatist imagination or utopian realism the way to follow?

### Abstract

In contemporary state of architecture some historians and theorists of architecture refer to a necessity to return to utopian thought and practice. The aim is to address a series of questions and problematics that have emerged throughout history when utopian thought, as derived from literary and philosophical genres, has been spatialised by architects and urbanists. A great part of historians and theorists of architecture refer to a crisis of representation that entails the failure of buildings to carry dependable cultural meaning. The question of utopia has always been a tool for social criticism. In the mid-1970 some architects like Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown were actively rejecting modernist utopias. On the other hand, Fredric Jameson problematics focus on the reasons for which the utopian imagination is worth fighting for and dissociating from totalitarianism. Manfredo Tafuri in his book *Progetto e Utopia* refers to the relation between semiology and formalism arguing that the intention of revitalizing architecture by means of an exploration of its internal structures appears as a way to rediscover a possible avant-garde role for architecture. Through semiology architecture seeks its own meaning. Tafuri's engagement with the present addresses contemporary architectural production in its relationship with modernism and capitalism. The intention is to describe the forms according to which the concept of ideology has affected the classifications in the contemporary "historiography" of architecture. The term "historiography" denotes the total stories written over a specific time period or on a specific thematic unity. A Pragmatist approach to architecture would entail a refocusing of intellectual energies onto the complex realities of the built environments. As far as the interchange between pragmatism and utopianism is concerned Reinhold Martin develops a theoretical discourse that aims to reconcile pragmatic aspects and utopian aspirations and dissolve the borders between these two approaches. According to Reinhold Martin the "post-critical" polemic is an effort to bury the utopian politics of the 1960s. Reinhold Martin arguments that utopia is a ghost that infuses everyday reality with other possible worlds and uses the term "utopian realism" in order to describe the effort which is intended to overcome the restrictions of the post-utopian pragmatism.

**Key words:** utopia, ideology, semiology, historiography, pragmatism.

## 1. Introduction.

The political aspect of the utopian visions could become evident if we try to locate utopianism within modern social and political thought. The importance of utopia for political theory and practice is linked to the ability of utopianism to transcend the present. The utopian rhetoric of modernism is linked to the realization that utopias enrich our understanding of the world by offering a global view of ideal social organization and operation. This idea seems to infuse modern movement's social and political agenda. The desire to confront the end of history was manifest in the modern idea of utopia. CIAM's vision may have originated with a conviction to defend Le Corbusier's poetic modernity. Twentieth century theory attempts to exorcise the ghost of history. The effort to preserve the representational content in the ideology of the utopian period is related to the denial to accept the dissolution of a homogeneous *zeitgeist* dispersed throughout civilization. If we approach modernism as a cultural representation rather than a historicist ideology we can understand and explain how memory, expression, and morality run through the utopian period of modern architecture. The functionalism of Sigfried Giedion and the anti-classicism of Bruno Zevi could be understood as an apology for the utopian vision of the modern movement during a period that an effort to hide the utopian character of modern architecture was pronounced. The semantic value of Utopia has been continuously subject to an historical evolution. The term Utopia tries to balance between *ou-topos* or *eu-topos*, aiming to conciliate the contradictory forces between its implications based on its meaning as the impossible and its implications based on its meaning as the ideally best place to live.

## 2. The porosity of the disciplines' boundaries: *Utopie* as a challenge of Post-war modernization and urban planning.

According to David Harvey *skepticism* towards the concept of utopia pervades recent urban thinking. David Harvey in his book *Spaces of Hope* refers to "Dialectical or spatiotemporal utopianism" in order to underline the difficulties of utopias to face the contradictions between spatial form and social process. The intention to combine utopian visions with social responsibility was behind the formulation of the group *Utopie* and the Situationists' group. During the 60s through the magazine *Utopie* a questioning of architecture and every formal and symbolic practice in terms of historicity and radicality took place. As Jean Baudrillard points out there was a moment at the end of the 1960s when everyone was trying to liquidate his own discipline<sup>i</sup>. This porosity of the discipline's boundaries is linked to the desire of theory of architecture to absorb and respond to extra-disciplinary forces. The magazine *Utopie* was a result of interrelations between architects, sociologists, and urbanists. Among its protagonists were Henri Lefebvre, Hubert Tonka and Jean Baudrillard. This magazine emerged in the late 1960s in Paris and it offered an alternative to professional urban planning journals. Sociology was playing an important role within the effort. There are some events that reveal the complications that emerge when these efforts to transform social relations via design takes place. The early departure of the architects Jean Aubert, Antoine Stinco and Jean-Paul Jungman from the group *Utopie* is one of them. Another event reflecting the inherent problematic nature of the attempt to change social conditions through architecture is the fact that the relationship between Constant and the Situationist International did not endure much.

## 3. Situationists: "psycho geography", "construction of situations" and "unitary urbanism".

The Situationist city remains utopian, mythic, a pure promise of community. Situationists tried to liquidate the space of the university. They expressed a utopian desire for radical change and for an other city and an other life that would transcend the present. They criticized utopian modernist planning projects such as Brasilia. As Jean Louis Violeau notes the "Situationists favored the technique of rapidly passing through various ambiances, or *dérive* (*drift*), starting in the late 1950s"<sup>ii</sup>. The Situationists shared their opposition to dominant utopian conceptions of urban planning with Henri Lefebvre. *Psycho geography* was connected with Situationists' early project, namely the "construction of situations" and "unitary urbanism". In what ways can Guy Debord's map be considered utopian? In order to answer this question Sadler's position provides some clue, noting that "*Internationale Situationniste* retreated from" the "modern, socialist, and technological ambition to a notion of utopia much closer to its sixteenth century origins in Sir Thomas More, who conceived utopia as the perfect society that is nowhere, a critical, political and moral standard by which to judge the institutions of actual European societies"<sup>iii</sup>. One aspect of *psycho geography* apparent from its maps was its concern with consciously and critically studying spaces from the perspective of lived experience.

## 4. The Hyper-architecture of transiency and desire.

Both the "Ville Mobile" (Fig. 1) of Yona Friedman and the "New Babylon" (Fig. 2) of Constant appeared between 1956 and 1962 representing the neo-utopianism of the early sixties. The principles of the "Ville Mobile" are characterized by a desire of transiency. The rapid transient is at the very base of life and architecture. Constant's "New Babylon", on the other hand, is a utopian city aiming to express the idea that the potentials and the tools to regain our lost freedom had come. The first of the maquettes of "New Babylon" dates from 1956, while Constant had presented the maquette for the yellow sector (1958) in *Internationale Situationniste*. "New Babylon" represents a *Megastructure* that included colossal complexes that could mix programs and be developed ad infinitum accumulating in the urban ocean. Constant believed that technology could provide the opportunity to people to dedicate all their energy to pure creativity. The fact that in "New Babylon" he had chosen not to design fixed residences avoiding private property reflects this idea. It seems that Constant adopts the position that happiness does not derive from the moderation of one's desires but rather from an endless possibility of satisfaction. "New Babylon" reflects the idea of a world where people are liberated from all norms, forms, and conventions<sup>iv</sup>. In a consummistic society, the "New Babylon" is emerging with the power of an ironical myth.



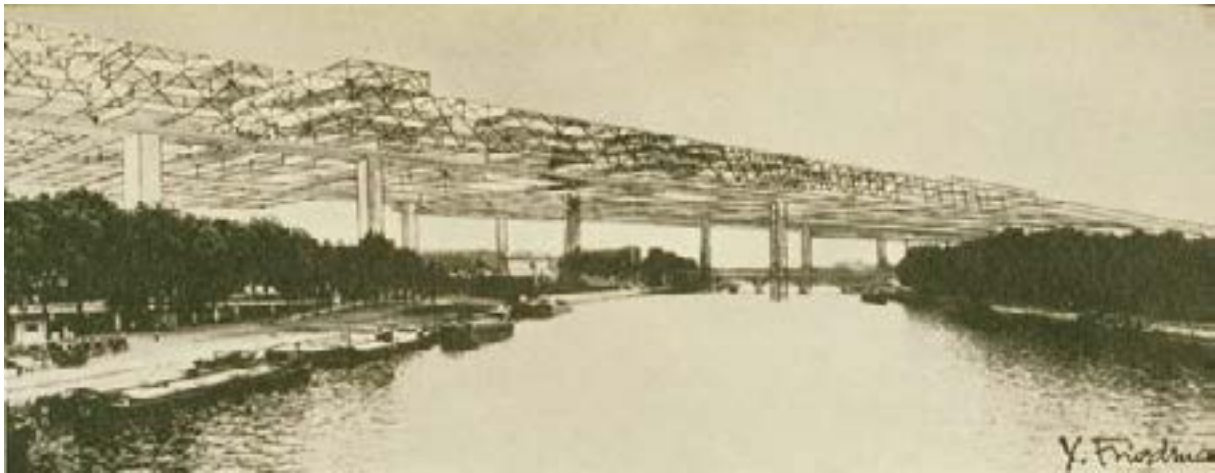


Fig.1

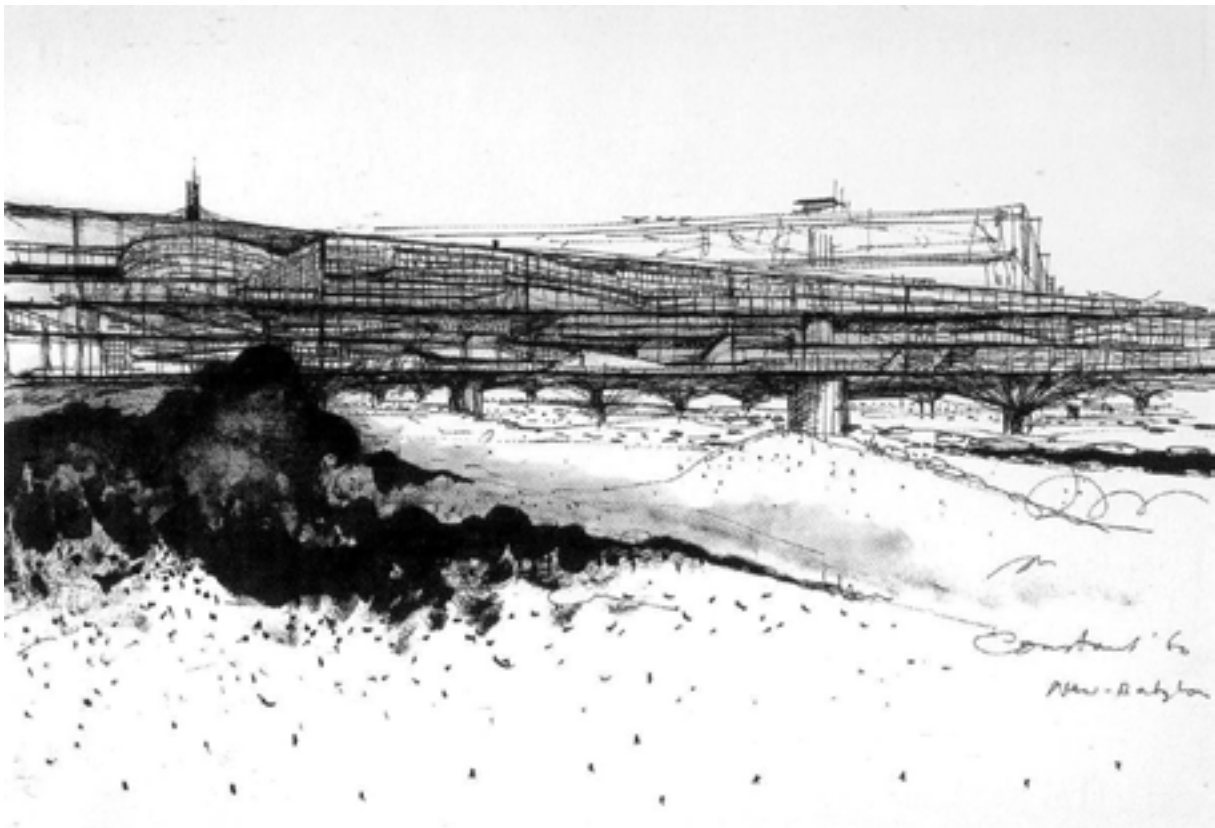


Fig. 2

### 5. "Radical Architecture" or "Techno-Utopia"?

The projects of "Radical Architecture", including Archigram, Archizoom and Superstudio (Fig. 3), did not seek to occupy space but were preoccupied with it without trying to incorporate in their design principles the *raison d'être* of the urban planning of their time, the 1960s. What Archizoom, Superstudio and Ugo La Pietra share is the dystopian character of their design principles, ideas and visions. Superstudio's "Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas", and Archizoom's "No-Stop City" (Fig. 4), both designed in 1971, express the dystopian fantasies that characterize "Radical Architecture's" visions. These counter-utopian projects attempted to deal with the negativity of progress, its hidden face, its counter-productivity. By the end of the 1960s there was a vigorous debate among a range of magazines about what really constituted radicality. Manfredo Tafuri in his essay "Design and Technological Utopia", written for the catalogue for the exhibition "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape", which took place in 1972 at MOMA, he expresses his disbelief towards the efforts of "Architettura Radicale" to modify the systems of productions through the formulation of anti-consumer utopias, claiming that these efforts show an inability to escape the capitalist dimension which is hidden within technology'.

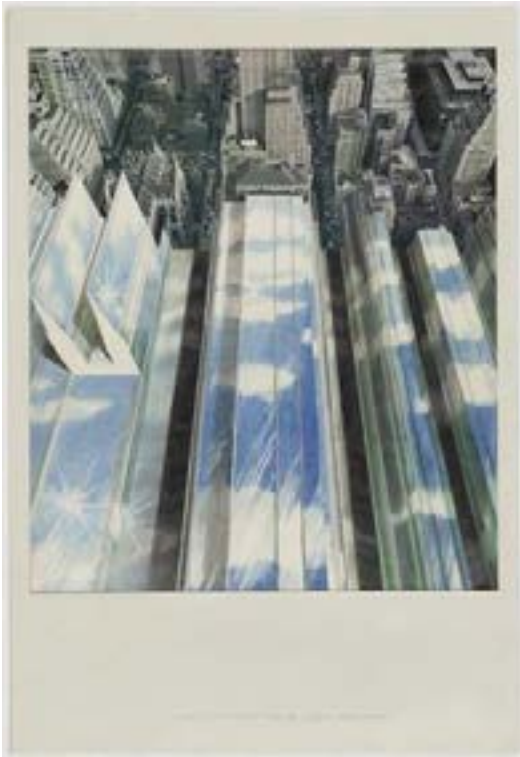


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

### 6. “Spatial urbanism”: the “French Urban Utopia” and the “American counterculture”.

*Spatial urbanism* refers to an avant-garde architectural phenomenon that blended technological innovation, leisure, culture and utopian vision. The utopian vision of *spatial urbanism* is expressed through the *Urban Utopia* in France during the decade of the sixties. The emergence of the *Urban Utopia* in France is related to the French encounters with the American counterculture during the 1960's, the 1970's and the 1980's. As a result, in order to understand the principles of the *Urban Utopia* in France we should bear in mind that "many aspects of French culture were impacted by the discourse of the American counterculture"<sup>vi</sup>. Among the historians of architecture whose work focused on modern architecture in the last quarter of the twentieth century only a few ones evoked the countercultural moment. However, Foucault and Deleuze had a keen interest in the American counterculture.

During the early twenty-first century historians and theorists of architecture focused more on avant-garde theory and practice of architecture than on alternative architecture. On the opposite, in the beginning of the twentieth-first century an interest in counterculture architecture appeared. Two very important events that influenced to a great extent the intellectual sphere in France and the US during the period that the interconnections between the discourse of the American counterculture and the French culture are the intellectual crisis of May 1968 and the oil crisis at the end of 1973. The French *Urban Utopia* provided an image for social transformation, representing “the last modernist attempt to “decipher” the spatial culture<sup>vii</sup>”. Henri Van Lier, Abraham Moles and Henri Lefebvre engaged and appropriated utopian urban projects in order to support their theories of space. *Spatial urbanism's* failure “derived from the naïve belief that the shape of the median world of networks and systems could be isolated from its *raison d'être*-the circulation of goods and the spectacular nature of postindustrial society<sup>viii</sup>”.

### 7. Utopianism as an obstacle for socially oriented architecture.

Lefebvre opposed to the traditional *utopianisms* of spatial form because of their closed authoritarianism. Jane Jacobs, among many other critics, developed an *anti-utopian* or *post-utopian* rhetoric against modernist planning visionaries as well. She accused utopian planners for their supposed authoritarianism and prescriptive ideals. Henri Lefebvre supports that the production of space should remain an endlessly open possibility. According to Lefebvre architecture is a social practice. This practice is defined by its external constraints imposed by other agents of the production of space and its internal competencies set by its specific concept, ideologies, and modes of representation. The 1980s are related to the end of representation and characterized by the culture of consumption. Fredric Jameson aims to approach the question of social totality in representation. On the other hand, Georg Lukács claims that reality can only be understood and penetrated as a totality.

### 8. “Technological utopianism” and the “American counterculture”.

*Technological utopianism* is a rhetorical form that places the use of technology as a key element of utopian visions. Contemporary theorists of digital media often echo the discourse of the utopians of the 1990s. The relationships between utopian computing technologies and utopian urban developments is evident in the research of William J. Mitchell's book, *City of Bits: Space, Place and the Infobahn*, in which the author tries to present the impacts of the digital revolution on the way that cities function and on the way that urbanity is interpreted. Stewart Brand, influenced by Buckminster Fuller (Fig.5) and Ken Kesey, and the commune movement, created *the Whole Earth Catalog*, which was an innovative interdisciplinary compendium that, as Simon Sadler notes, was a colloquium connecting its participants to design and to the world at large. Fred Turner in his book *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* the *Catalog* mentions that *the Whole Earth Catalog* listed periodicals, some emanating from the counterculture, such as the *Modern Utopian* and the *Realist*, others more mainstream, like National Geographic and Scientific American. Tafuri denounced the proliferation of an underground design of protest, dismissing the American hippy communities that were influenced by Buckminster Fuller and rejecting, at the same time, “Radical Architecture's” *negative designs*.



Fig. 5

### 9. The “School of Venice”.

Under the umbrella of the term “School of Venice” are included the people that were engaged in the IUAV during the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s embracing conflictual between them groups of people. All these people share the common characteristic of expressing an intense interest for the relationship between the work of the historical “project” on the present and the work of the architectural “project” on the present as well. The importance of this engagement with the relationship between the historical “project” the architectural “project” on the present is based on the effort of structuring architectural tools as the drawing, the image and the text as well in order to address the problematics concerning critical history. Also Rossi and Manfredo Tafuri operated in the same years, developing their research within the IUAV. The differentiation of their methodologies and ideas is reflected on the fact that Manfredo Tafuri worked for the Department of History of Architecture, while Aldo Rossi worked for the Department of Architectural Design. Carlo Aymonimo, who was the director of the IUAV during the

1970s, in his book emphasizes that an important issue that is addressed by “the School of Venice” is the replacement of architectural history based on the interpretation derived from a perspective related to the history of arts by methodologies concerning architectural history grounded on the influence of political sciences in relation to urban studies.

### 9.1. The “School of Venice” and *micropolitics*.

The issue of the *micropolitical* is incorporated in the attempt of the “School of Venice” to engage in a political critique. Though the theorization of the role that architecture could play in politics and structuring *modi operandi* [methods of operation] towards ideology a group of people related to “the School of Venice” embarked on a kind of *negative critique* that examines historical failures and discursive fissures. A group of Marxist architecture critics associated with the “School of Venice”, as Manfredo Tafuri, Massimo Cacciari and Georges Teyssot, played a significant role in introducing French poststructuralist thought in America via their debates, especially through the problematic they developed concerning *micropolitics*. This is related to the fact that in the mid-1970s the French became fascinated with Italian architectural culture. Jean Louis Cohen in his essay “The Italophiles at Work” draws attention to the French sources of Italian discourses mentioning the influence of Manfredo Tafuri by Roland Barthes<sup>x</sup>, which is manifested in *Teorie e Storia dell’architettura* [Theories and History of Architecture]. Franco Rella shares with Manfredo Tafuri his interest for the *œuvre* of Gilles Deleuze. The Italian Marxists adopted Foucault’s approach in order to analyze the repressive function of the capitalist city. An important reference for the “School of Venice” was the work of Walter Benjamin as well. The “School of Venice” shared the position that historiography has a political potential.

### 9.2. The “School of Venice” and *negative thought*.

This belief was a common one among Italian left-wing intellectuals of the '60s and early '70s. At the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s the “Autonomia” groups developed a *negative thought* influenced by Antonio Negri<sup>x</sup>. Massimo Cacciari played an exceptional role in the activity of the “School of Venice” considering “it was the instrumentalization of the crisis, not the institution of rules, that enabled the bourgeoisie to control the political forces of capitalism”<sup>xi</sup> and that dialectics “was the basis of the political establishment of the bourgeois state”<sup>xii</sup> trying to challenge dialectics from within. He was also active in politics. His studies in German urban sociology contributed to a great extent to the development of his approach. His work is influenced by the approaches of Heidegger and Benjamin. His main contribution to the theory of architecture is the concept of *negative thought*. According to Massimo Cacciari any theory that might promise a future emancipated society has become impossible. He tries to demonstrate the existence of a plurality of languages. Massimo Cacciari’s *negative thought* is of vital structural significance for Tafuri’s set of hypotheses. The *negative thought* of Massimo Cacciari derives from his idea that the cultural should be separated from the economic and the political and that the different spheres characterizing modernity should be self-contained and detached between them. When Jürgen Habermas uses the term “project” to talk of “the project of modernity” he refers to the utopian and programmatic connotations of immediate emancipation implied by the term. In opposition to Habermas, both Manfredo Tafuri and Massimo Cacciari as they believe that “a society that is governed by the regime of modernity does not easily respond to individual actions or analyses”<sup>xiii</sup>.

## 10. Manfredo Tafuri’s critique of ideologies.

### 10.1. Manfredo Tafuri’s opposition to *operative criticism*.

Tafuri’s critique of ideologies is based on his belief that modernity is an ongoing process. He treats history as a critique of ideology, supporting that the task of writing history is the unveiling of ideologies. This position is evident when he states that “instead of making history, one makes ideology: which besides betraying the task of history, hides the real possibilities of transforming reality”<sup>xiv</sup>. *Operative criticism* is based on the argument that the present always conditions the perceptions of the past. The idea of progress is fundamental to operative criticism. *Operative history*, as far as the domain of architecture is concerned, was practiced in Italy by Bruno Zevi, Leonardo Benevolo and Paolo Portoghesi. In his *œuvre Teorie e storia dell’architettura* Tafuri develops a critique against *operative criticism*, accusing it for being a form of intentionally biased and manipulated history constructed by critics in order to support specific trends in design. Historical investigation for him is a critique of ideology that constructs a problematic that challenges both the past and the present.

### 10.2. The incompatibility between the Marxist concept of truth and the concept of *poststructuralism* and **Modernity**.

In Tafuri’s approach the incompatibility between the Marxist concept of truth and that of *poststructuralism* and **Modernity** is seen as a blind historical force. *Poststructuralism* is based on the thesis that “reality cannot be grasped except through socially defined [...] categories”<sup>xv</sup>. Tafuri seems to believe that after the events of May 1968 there was a decline of revolutionary politics. Tafuri supports that it is impossible for architectural criticism to link up directly with architectural practice claiming that the two disciplines operate within different linguistic systems. In Tafuri’s work history is seen as a project in crisis and cannot be described as linear series of events. He calls history a project because he conceives history as a continual redesigning of the past.

**10.3. Manfredo Tafuri and the rediscovery of a possible avant-garde role for architecture.** In the early 1970s a number of journals devoted to an engagement with the history of the avant-gardes. This choice could be interpreted as a strategy of recovery of the revolutionary character of the 1920s and 1930s. The historical avant-garde, with its utopian intentions is placed at the center of the problematic that Tafuri develops *Teorie e Storia*

dell'architettura. According to Tafuri the historical project is not a resolved, detached ex post-discourse on the past. Tafuri refuses any periodization of a postmodernism because he believes in a high modernist Utopianism. Tafuri shifted radically his position at the end of the 1960s. In the beginning of his work his focus was on the design methodology. For example, in his book *Teorie e Storia dell'architettura* that was published in 1968 he was trying to find a program concerning design methodology. After the publication of this book and after having investigated the development of avant-garde architecture in Russia and Germany he turns his interest to the approach that he structures in *Progetto e Utopia*. In *Progetto e Utopia* he aims to describe a concept of a dialectical history of architecture. Tafuri treats *postmodernism* as a still high modernist *Utopianism*. For Tafuri "intervention into the system of production and consumption could not take place without opposition"<sup>xvi</sup>. As Reinhold Martin mention Tafuri adopts "Frankfurt School-style negative dialectics"<sup>xvii</sup>.

#### 10.4. Between Colin Rowe and Manfredo Tafuri.

Colin Rowe and Manfredo Tafuri share a suspicion of organizing visions. Rowe's critique of modern architecture through the concept of *collage* is linked to a critique of modern utopianism and, according to Michael Hays, it incorporates, at the same time, Karl Popper's anti-utopianism<sup>xviii</sup>. Colin Rowe, influenced by his professor Rudolf Wittkower, develops an approach based on a Wölfflinian close-formal reading. In his article "Waiting for Utopia", written in 1967, he refers to Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* and Banham's *The New Brutalism: Ethic or Aesthetic* in order to underline the contradiction between the rehabilitation of style and taste as the primary determinants of form, attempted by Robert Venturi, and the discernment of the gap between the theory and practice of modern architecture, emphasized by Reyner Banham. He chooses to highlight this contradiction between these two different approaches, adopted by Venturi and Banham because he believes that these approaches represented the two polar extremes between which architecture oscillated in 1967<sup>xix</sup>. For Rowe the revitalization of the radical promise of modernism is not achievable. At the same time he treats technology and capitalism as two interrelated parameters without expressing any interest to differentiate them and he denounces the utopianism of modernism as a form of totalitarianism akin to the apocalyptic visions of Marxism. Rowe believes that the project of autonomy could go on without problems in the architectural academic milieu of the post-revolutionary America. In opposition to this optimistic approach, Tafuri supports that social transformation could not happen through the continuation of the project of autonomy. He was opposed to the position of Bernard Huet according to which the effort of transforming the capitalist system could coincide with the incorporation of the architect within it.

#### 11. Fredric Jameson, Jean Baudrillard and the fall of *grand narratives*: Marxist analysis or "dialectical utopia"?

Jameson clearly regrets postmodern architecture's abandonment of both political and aesthetic utopias. Jameson rejects Tafuri's pessimism, claiming that one does not get out of Ideology by refusing it. Jameson tried to reconcile the problematic of fragmentation and unity, conceiving postmodernism as social fragmentation and supporting, at the same time, that culture cannot escape from the processes of capital. He argues that certain works of architecture from the 1970s and 1980s tended to materialize the "cultural logic of late capitalism". In the "The Politics of Utopia" he explains why the utopian imagination is worth fighting for and dissociating from totalitarianism. For Jameson architectural writing should not aim for cultural reproduction (representation), but, on the other hand, it should aim cultural production. Jameson interprets dialectics as a "dual obligation to invent ways of uniting the here-and-now of the immediate situation with the totalizing logic of the global or Utopian one"<sup>xx</sup>. The weakness of *grand narratives* [*grands récits*] to understand and explain events as this of May 1968 shows the necessity to reconsider the function and the structure of historical enquiry. This transformation of historical enquiry that is linked to the realization that the *grand narratives* [*grands récits*] were not able to explain a group of events is related to the work of Jean Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson. These theoreticians of postmodernity share an interest for understanding history in relation to postmodernism. However, their approaches have many differences. An important difference between the work of Jean Baudrillard and this of Fredric Jameson is the fact that the first theoretician tries to understand history in relation to contemporary media simulations, while the second theoretician tries to understand history structuring a Marxist analysis of it. Jean Baudrillard states that through dialectical utopia "we can elaborate, outside and within the present system, an urban thought"<sup>xxi</sup>. For Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio the new technologies of the twentieth century are producing both new objects.

#### 12. How ideology affects the classifications in the contemporary historiography of architecture?

An aspect that affects the ways in which historiographical methods are structured is the periodizing framework within which historical events are to be categorized. As far as the effort to configure and to explore the nature of the relationship between the historical and the neo-avant-garde is concerned I could refer to Tafuri's position that the American neo-avant-garde's project is a new mythology. The problem of writing the history of a discipline in relation to a crisis in narrative and to the narrative representation of history contributed to the emergence of historiographical methods supporting that history is always narrative in its very structure. The ruptures in our perception of the continuity of history arise out of the failure of the present and its objects to sustain our expectations of the future. Mary McLeod refers to the notion of "fragmentation" expressing an interest for the specific historical dynamics of architecture that characterize our epoch that is dominated by the market ideology<sup>xxii</sup>.

### 12.1. Between Manfredo Tafuri and Michel Foucault.

Tafuri's approach towards historiography is influenced by the position of Foucault according to which each historian during the process of interpretation cannot avoid some deformations of the events. However, Tafuri does not accept Foucault's argument according to which we cannot know reality because this thesis would threaten his belief according to which reality could change. Both approaches share the position that architectural discourse is not enough in itself to explain the appearance of specific forms, the derivation of typologies and the whole concatenation of a spatial genealogy.

#### 12.1.1. Michel Foucault's *genealogy*.

According to Foucault, *genealogy* is "a form of history which can account for the constitution of knowledges, discourses, domains of objects, etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to a field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of events"<sup>xxiii</sup>. *Genealogy* rejects the subject as the originating force or point of continuity in history. Following Foucault's position we could support that the activated structure or contextual field of a given epoch is an *episteme* and that discourse produces intellectual territories composed of social and geographic distributions of knowledge and power. The significance and the most interesting point of Foucault's approach is linked to the realization that Foucault does not try to structure a "method" which will be superior to other methods in objectivity and comprehensiveness but he structures some instruments of analysis which take their starting point in the political-intellectual conflicts of the present. He distances himself from traditional humanistic historiography and at the same time from a Marxist totalizing theory.

#### 12.1.2. Verbal usage in opposition to historical narration.

In order to understand better the details that characterize Foucault's approach we should replace the notions of "history" and "philosophy" by the notions of "archaeology" and "discourse". In this way we could escape the dangers of misunderstanding his approach. Another important issues in Foucault's work is the understanding of "thoughts" as "events". "Author", "discipline" and "the will to truth" are secondary functions of the discourse according to Foucault. In order to understand this dimension we should comprehend the fact that Foucault focuses on the aspect of verbal usage in opposition to historical narration. On the other hand, we should have in mind that this distinction between verbal usage and historical narration is not identical to the distinction between the written language and the spoken language.

#### 12.1.3. Trying to reveal the tasks that capitalist development has taken away from architecture.

On the other hand, Tafuri states that the "critical act will consist of a recomposition of the fragments once they are historicized: in their "remontage"<sup>xxiv</sup>. Tafuri comprehends modernism as a unitary development in which the avant-garde visions of utopia are recognized as an idealization of capitalism. In the late 60s Manfredo Tafuri examines the *instrumentalization* that was created by the capitalist rationalization. He supports that the utopia of architectural ideology lies on its function of resolving the contradiction between the internal, subjective resistance to metropolitan shock and the external, structural totality of the system of production. Tafuri's approach takes ideology as its object and tries to reveal the tasks that capitalist development has taken away from architecture. Tafuri expresses his pessimism towards the possibility of architecture to engage in a social practice in the context of late capitalism.

### 12.2. The Rise of History and Theory and the Anthologies of theory of architecture since the beginning of the 2000s.

The historiographical impulse went hand in hand with a broadened range of theoretical approaches to architecture, ranging from semiotics and structuralism, to sociology, cybernetics, and systems theory, bringing about a new condition in which theory becomes a form of practice in its own. The historical orientation was a means for staging critical issues in the cultural battles waged around contemporary practice. Theories of architecture are today more historically determined than ever before. The effort to structure different ways of classifications concerning architectural theory is apparent in the Anthologies of theory of architecture that have seen a proliferation since the beginning of the 2000s. Among them I could refer to Ockman's *Architecture Culture 1943-1968*, Nesbitt's *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*, Hay's *Architecture Theory Since 1968* and Leach's *Rethinking Architecture*. The oscillation between history and theory is an important symptom of these anthologies of theory of architecture. If someone adopts the position that there was no theory in architecture before 1968 they should examine this hypothesis investigating how this shift is related to the institutional evolution concerning the education of Architecture after 1968. In order to understand the relationship between history and theory we should understand the function of narrative and the differentiations of different historical approaches towards *narrativity*. The relationship between continuity and "fragmentation" is an important dimension that we should examine as well if we want to understand how different historical methodologies treat reality. Lyotard declared that history imposes continuity and closure on the gaps and silences of reality. The *grand narratives* [*grands récits*] are the organizing principle for modernity. A genealogy of *grand narratives* [*grands récits*] could reveal some strange affinities. These affinities to which I refer are related to the thesis that the desire to structure formal principles differentiating "master" and "local", "historical" and "non-historical", modes of discourse threatens to contribute to a return to the metaphysics we claim to have escaped.

### 12.3. Historiography and "spatial politics".

How should we treat historiography if we claim that the "spatial politics" of contemporary cities can only be fully understood by exploring how these categories are linked together in social practice? A recent "spatial turn" in the historiography of consumption has begun to explore the spatiality of consumption practices. The social meanings

of spatial practices are studied in order to structure historiographical approaches through the analysis of the spatial footprints of changing consumption practices. The basic idea behind this historiographical trend is the belief that consumption patterns reflect their own politics and their own social meanings. The aim of this historiographical approach is to analyze how “the impact of space, place, and geographical imagination” is reflected “on social and individual practices”<sup>xxv</sup>.

### 13. Reconciliation between pragmatic aspects and utopian aspirations, or toward “utopian realism”.

#### 13.1. Pragmatism.

Pragmatism is related to the belief that we should interpret reality through the formulation of an approach that takes into consideration that ideas have an instrumental dimension which lies on their possibility to be used as plans of action. According to pragmatism, ideas borrow their meanings from their practical real world consequences. Information technology design and the neo-environmental trends have attempted to engage with new pragmatism.

#### 13.2. From the discursive “essence” of modernism to self-criticism.

“The death of the author” assumed by *poststructuralism* is related to an attitude towards architecture related to a development of the interest for research around questions concerning the authority of the architect. At the same time, there was a shift from the discursive “essence” of modernism to self-criticism that can be interpreted as a shift from utopianism to aesthetic purity.

#### 13.3. Toward an architecture that is made by use and design.

The diffusion that is attributed to the image culture pushes to a redefinition of the relationship between the project and its user and to the formulation of an approach that is based on the idea that architecture is made by use and design. This approach is related to the position that the architect is no longer granted the role as master of the project and it is opposed to the category of the “user” as deployed in modernism. It is based on the position arguing that the category of the “user” was a particular device used by modernism in order to detach the lived experience of space of the modern societies' members by turning it into a mental abstraction.

#### 13.4. The contradiction between the political and the aesthetic critique.

The contradiction between the political and the aesthetic critique which characterizes the differentiation between Tafuri's and Eisenman's approach should be resolved<sup>xxvi</sup>. In order to understand how this contradiction could be resolved we should understand the mechanisms that reduce political critique to an “aestheticization of politics”, a phenomenon analyzed by Walter Benjamin. Some intellectuals choose to focus on the aesthetic critique, while other intellectuals try to preserve the ability of the academic practice to engage in a political critique, a *realpolitik*.

#### 13.5. When the social concern meets the utopian aspirations, or toward a reconciliation between social comprehensiveness and the spirit of utopia.

If we borrow the words of Reinhold Martin we could claim that utopia “is what Derrida called a “specter,” a ghost that infuses everyday reality with other, possible worlds”<sup>xxvii</sup>. Nowadays, there is an accelerated trend to use terms as “Utopian Realism”, “Speculative Realism”, etc. On the other hand, an emergence of terms as “Pragmatist Imagination” is also very intense. Both trends reflect a desire to harness the spirit of utopia while emphasizing the need for realism and the need to avoid “closed” and “totalistic” blueprints. What is missing in the architectural anticipations of today is a deep humanistic concern and the comprehensive features of a real utopia. As Jean Louis Cohen notes “if pragmatism is about “things in the making” and pragmatism in the architectural sphere is about buildings and cities in the making, the question of temporality can hardly been avoided”<sup>xxviii</sup>. This means that the internal temporalities of the design process and the temporalities of social life should be taken into consideration. Another aspect that a pragmatist approach to design implies is the necessity to respond to the future questioning how buildings and cities respond to the phenomenon of time. Some of the questions that should be addressed when architecture and urban design become entangled in utopian thought are the problematics concerning the struggles surrounding the civil rights movements, the class inequalities in the cities as well as the demands to reform in the structure of education. Is pragmatist imagination or utopian realism the way to follow?

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Fig. 1. Yona Friedman, "Ville Spatiale", 1958 (Source:

<http://laboratoireurbanismeinsurrectionnel.blogspot.gr/2012/10/architecture-mobile.html>)

Fig. 2. Perspective of "New Babylon; Gezicht op een sector", Constant Nieuwenhuys, 1959-60 (Source:

<http://relationalthought.wordpress.com/2012/11/24/1346/>)

Fig. 3. "New York Extrusion project", 1969, by Superstudio (Source: <http://cup2013.wordpress.com/tag/twelve-cautionary-tales-for-christmas/>)

Fig. 4. Andrea Branzi, "Residential Parking", "No-Stop-City", 1969, Floor plan (Source:

<http://relationalthought.wordpress.com/2012/05/21/1101/>)

Fig. 5. Stewart Brand's "Whole Earth Catalog", 1968 (left) (Source: <http://silviorusso.com/tangible-networks-a-non-digital-journey-into-cybernetics/>) and "Save our Planet, Save our Cities" Dome above Manhattan by Buckminster-Fuller, 1962 (Poster produced by Olivetti) (right) (Source: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/journals/conservation-journal/issue-57/rocket-science-a-new-method-of-poster-display-for-cold-war-modern-design-1945-1970/>)

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## Biography

**Marianna Charitonidou** posee una maestría y diplomado en Ingeniería Arquitectónica de la Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad Aristóteles de Tesalónica con honores (9.16/10). Durante el curso 2007-2008 ha sido galardonado con una Beca de Intercambio Erasmus para estudiar en la École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture, Paris-Malaquais. Tiene una Maestría en Ciencias en Diseño Ambiental Sostenible de la Architectural Association de Londres y una Maestría en Filosofía Licenciado en Filosofía de las Ciencias y Teoría de la Arquitectura con honores (9.75/10) del Programa de Posgrado Interdepartamental " Design-Space-Cultura" de la Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad Técnica Nacional de Atenas. Desde diciembre 2012 trabaja como profesor ayudante en los cursos de Historia y Teoría de la Arquitectura y en los Diseño Estudios sobre el tema de la vivienda en la Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad Técnica Nacional de Atenas. Desde julio 2013 es un candidato de doctorado en la Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad Técnica Nacional de Atenas.

**Marianna Charitonidou** holds a Master and Diploma Degree in Architectural Engineering from the School of Architecture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki with honors (9.16/10). During the academic year 2007-2008 has been awarded with an Erasmus Exchange Scholarship in order to study in École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture, Paris-Malaquais. She holds a Master of Science Degree in Sustainable Environmental Design from the Architectural Association in London and a Master of Philosophy Degree in Philosophy of Sciences and Theory of Architecture with honors (9.75/10) from the Inter-departmental Postgraduate Program "Design-Space-Culture" of the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens. Since December 2012 she is working as Teaching Assistant in the courses of History and Theory of Architecture and in the Design Studios on the topic of habitation at the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens. Since July 2013 she is a Ph.D Candidate at the School of Architecture of the National Technical University of Athens.

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Con el apoyo de:

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