

Construction Sites of Utopia

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Utopian narratives since Thomas More have conceived new spaces for their imaginary societies. Therefore, the title is not meant as a metaphor, but as a discussion of how the space entailed by utopias relate to their propositions for overcoming the misery of human labour. Some utopias aim at the alienation of labour, sustaining that work can be creative and pleasurable if only freed from coercion. New spaces could thus result from collective artistic practices, reconciling intellectual and manual skills. Other utopias aim at labour itself and its ideology as a key for human fulfilment, imagining instead a technological development that would allow us to live without any concern for our “material exchange with nature” (Marx). This paper proposes to examine their often unreflected premises with regard to construction work. It shows that many utopias remain trapped in functionalist and anti-functionalist discourses, failing to address the material production of space and its role in capitalist societies.

Biography:

Silke Kapp is an Architect, Phd in Philosophy, and senior professor School of Architecture of the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (Belo Horizonte, Brazil), where she also coordinates the research group MOM (Morar de Outras Maneiras / Living in Other Ways), focused on critical theory of the production of everyday spaces.