

## *Introduction:* *The Echo of Utopia*

The magazine *Utopie: Sociologie de l'urbain* surfaced in Paris in May of 1967, a moment in which a wave of economic and technological optimism met with a rising crosscurrent of intellectual ferment and political radicalization. When the magazine disappeared just over a decade later in 1978, the landscape had changed completely; the intervening years witnessed the worldwide student and worker protests of 1968, economic recession, oil crises, and the rise of international terrorism: an era of pervasive political uncertainty. During this decade *Utopie* was the name adopted by a changeable grouping of architects, urbanists, sociologists, and theorists—an experiment in collaborative thought carried out in the group's eponymous magazine, but also through exhibitions, pamphlets, posters, and articles. The group was bound together less through a shared approach to design, than by the desire to radically question the manner in which postwar modernization reorganized the urban fabric and large swaths of everyday life. *Utopie* was preoccupied with the new spaces and new media through which power was materialized, but equally with the ephemeral, fleeting, and mundane, elements that slipped through the grasp of architecture and urbanism. As the decade wore on, the group and its interests slowly shifted, coming to focus upon an inverse condition: one in which social space appeared to have imploded, leaving a vacuum completely enclosed by media and simulation.

While certain writings from the magazine have been translated and republished—notably those of key group member Jean Baudrillard—the vast majority have not, leaving the larger scope of *Utopie's* intellectual production in the dark. And while the group's experiments with pneumatic architecture have garnered attention in recent years, they have not infrequently been taken to represent the production of the group as a whole, leaving the relationship of these experiments to the magazine's rich field of reference and debate largely unexamined.<sup>1</sup> By bringing together an extended selection of the group's

1. See: Marc Dessauce, ed. *The Inflatable Moment : Pneumatics and Protest in '68*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999).

published work for the first time and making it available to an English-speaking public, the present volume seeks to shed light on the broader range of the group's activities and the contexts in which they appeared.

*Utopie* appeared amidst an international flourishing of small-scale, independent publications during the 1960s and 1970s, whose density and effect rivaled the little magazines of the historical avant-garde in the 1920s and 1930s. Fueled by a desire for alternative channels of communication as well as by the greater accessibility and economy of printing processes like offset lithography, such publications were a crucial vehicle for producing and disseminating thought on the margins of official institutions.<sup>2</sup> The arguments developed in *Utopie* were designed for reproduction; the physical manner in which they were laid out and shaped by the media used to disseminate them are a key part of their meaning. The present selection reproduces the graphic layout in which these statements originally appeared, both in the pages of *Utopie* and in the different pamphlets, and articles the group produced. *Utopie* was an intensely collective group project, yet it was not one that sought strict ideological uniformity, but rather deliberately placed ideological and iconographic differences in the foreground. The magazine's initial format was the result of a standard column width used for pamphlets to which an enlarged margin was added. Dubbed the *colonne critique* (critical column), the margin contained texts and images that contradicted, elaborated, commented, and parodied those in the central column. Such a layout produced a clash of egos and an exchange of voices, but also a collision of ideas from differing domains, from theories of obsolescence and technological transformation in contemporary architecture, to philosophy, critical urban sociology, semiology, and art history, together with a lineage of revisionist Marxism which had developed outside of the French Communist Party beginning in the late 1950s. In place of unified, outward denunciation, the group sought exchange and disagreement; rather than interdisciplinary collaboration, a more complete fusion and a shared process of autocritique.<sup>3</sup> Hence the magazine's inaugural editorial: not a programmatic statement of intent, but two blank rectangles outlining the column width, prefaced by a notably skeptical statement on the nature of the critical journal itself.<sup>4</sup>

Finding ways of working with rather than against ideological heterogeneity can be seen in the context of the era's struggles to reform education at the École

2. For a lucid analysis of *Utopie's* place within the broader lineage of revisionist Marxism, see Jean-Louis Violeau, "Utopic: In Acts," in *The Inflatable Moment*, pp. 36–59; on the broad role of journals on the left during these years see Michel Trebitsch, "Les Circulations de la pensée critique de 1956 à 1968," *Les Années 68: le temps de confrontation* (Paris: Editions Complexe, 2000) pp. 69–87. On the phenomenon of little magazines in architecture see *Clip/Stamp/Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X to 197X*, Beatriz Colomina and Craig Buckley eds, (Barcelona: ACTAR, 2010).

3. In certain respects, *Utopie's* use of the margin reactivated a practice with roots in archaic textual commentary; but it can also be seen as part of a broader post-structuralist emphasis upon the materiality of writing and the conventions of the printed text. Similar strategies can be found in Charles Jencks and George Baird, *Meaning in Architecture* (New York: Braziller, 1969) and as well in Jacques Derrida's "Tympan," in *Marges de la Philosophie*, (Paris: Editions de minuit, 1972).

4. "Presentation," p. 25 (all page references are to the translations in the present volume, unless otherwise noted).

Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (ENSBA), a significant site in the group's formation. The iconic protests and occupations that erupted in May 1968, bringing an end to the Beaux-Arts system of education, were a flashpoint within a much longer struggle for reform, dating back to the early 1960s. A key demand amongst reformers was to make architectural teaching a part of the university system, enabling it to join related fields of inquiry such as urbanism, sociology, history, and philosophy.<sup>5</sup> A committee of students, assistants, and professors established to make proposals for the reform of education at the ENSBA in 1966–7 engaged this desire for rapprochement, bringing together figures from a range of backgrounds, including the philosopher-sociologist Henri Lefebvre.<sup>6</sup> Arriving with Lefebvre was Hubert Tonka—his assistant at the Institut d'Urbanisme de Paris—who had already begun to forge a link with the architects Jean Aubert, Jean-Paul Jungmann, and Antoine Stinco.<sup>7</sup> These four, together with landscape architect Isabelle Auricoste, the urbanist Catharine Cot, Jean Baudrillard and René Lourau—assistants to Lefebvre in the sociology department at the university of Nanterre-Paris X—made up the initial group in late 1966. If Lefebvre served as a key intellectual influence, he also played a material role in the creation of the magazine, connecting the young editors with his longtime colleague Serge Jonas, whose small publishing house, Éditions Anthropos, put out *Utopie's* first three issues.<sup>8</sup>

*Utopie's* diverse disciplinary backgrounds and intellectual interests also drove the magazine's iconographic heterogeneity. Composed from newspaper and magazine clippings, advertisements, headlines, drawings, photographs, and transfer lettering, *Utopie* may have drawn on the intellectual legacy of journals like *Internationale Situationniste* and *Arguments*, but it did not look much like them. *Utopie's* visual universe was closer to the short-lived ENSBA journal *Melp!*, which Hubert Tonka helped edit in 1966.<sup>9</sup> Composed of six large newsprint sheets folded in thirds and stapled, the layout flowed horizontally across several sheets, requiring the reader to perform a complex movement in order to follow a single text. A platform for a number of leftist factions within the school, *Melp!* assembled a broad range of critiques of the teaching and administration. While Marxist concepts of

5. The oversight of architectural education was the responsibility of the French Ministry of Cultural Affairs, headed at the time by André Malraux. The teaching of architecture is still not within the university system in France.

6. On the history of the reform movement see Jean-Louis Violeau, *Les architectes et mai 68* (Paris: Recherches, 2005). See also: Martin Pawley and Bernard Tschumi, "The Beaux-Arts since 1968," *Architectural Design* v. 41, (September 1971) pp. 533–566.

7. Aubert, Stinco, and Tonka first collaborated in the Séminaire Tony Garnier, an external seminar which served as the sole opportunity for the study of Urbanism at the ENSBA. Together they produced the small book *Propos sur le Logis*, (Paris: École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts, 1966).

8. The first three issues of the journal included advertising for Editions Anthropos and its related publications, including Anatole Kopp's landmark survey of Soviet architecture and urbanism from the 1920s, *Ville et Révolution*, Henri Lefebvre's *Le droit à la ville*, the complete works of Charles Fourier, as well as Marcel Poète's *Introduction à l'urbanisme*, for which Tonka wrote the introduction.

9. The two issues of *Melp!* in 1966 marked a more militant framing of the problem of educational reform which had begun to be developed in *Melpomène*, the longstanding journal of the student body at the ENSBA. *Melp!*'s editors included Nelly Barbieri, Jacques Barda, Roland Castro, Bernard Faye, Jean-Paul Gautron, Pierre Granveaud, Antoine Grumbach, Dominique Montrassou, Hubert Tonka, and Bernard Trilles.

ideology, production, and alienation were central to such critiques, they were formulated via an iconography drawn from British and American Pop, from the Beatles *Help!*, to the painted comics of Roy Lichtenstein, and the technological expendability explored in *Archigram*.<sup>10</sup>

A similarly unstable, agonistic mixture of Pop and Marxism contributed to the tension animating the first issues of *Utopie*. While critical of the role images played within contemporary architecture and consumer culture, the magazine was itself literally assembled from a wide array of image material, albeit in a manner that resisted and undermined pictorial coherence. Hubert Tonka and René Lourau's "Repression" (*Utopie* 1) included advertisements and slogans clipped from *Elle*, *Playboy*, and *Le Nouvel Observateur*, photographs taken on the suburban fringes of Paris, and texts cut from *Liaisons*, an obscure bulletin published by the Parisian police. Everyday commodities such as plastic sunglasses, clip bras, and spray deodorants—objects whose novelty in 1967 was beginning to wear off—were placed adjacent to images of flexible, lightweight components, construction cranes, and the repeating façade patterns of buildings, creating a "magic chain" of connotative association, in which new promises of liberation were linked to new forms of repression.<sup>11</sup> Like many other contributions to the first three issues, "Repression" merged visual interest with a concern for the semiotic status of the combined elements. If the relationship between word and image was not that of text and illustration, neither was it collage, nor exactly Situationist *détournement*. Unlike letterpress, in which type and image were produced separately, with offset lithography the page was composed through a "paste-up" process, in a which a heterogenous array of material—which might include clippings, photographs, typewriter pages, patterns, and transfer lettering—were affixed to a support and captured photomechanically in order to create flexible printing plates. Drawing upon the expanded concept of "écriture" within the period's semiological discourses, *Utopie's* blocks of image-text can be seen as a hybrid mode of writing, that was simultaneously an attempt to structure the printing medium used to produce the magazine.<sup>12</sup> From "Repression," to Jungmann's article "Paper Cities," or from Aubert's "Becoming Outdated," and Antoine Stinco's "Art?...!", the paste-up process involved not only taking apart and reassembling images, but also their "rhetoric," a practice calling for a different engagement with reading.

10. In *Melp!* 2, (April 1966) *Archigram* appears both in the form of a quote taken from a letter from Peter Cook, but also in the form of an image of a gasometer reproduced with the ironic caption "HLM Archigram," referring to the acronym for state-subsidized housing in France: *habitations à loyer modéré*.

11. Tonka and Lourau's mixture of new commodities with construction equipment can be seen to parallel the manner in which connotative terms such as "clip," applied to detachable, flexible, and lightweight, industrial components, were appropriated more broadly by architectural discourse at the time. See Reyner Banham's "A Clip-On Architecture," *Design Quarterly*, 63 (1965).

12. See for instance, the discussion of écriture in Hubert Tonka, "Court essai reflexe sur les fragments d'un urbanisme," *Utopie* 1 (1967) 64–90. The semiology of Roland Barthes was of particular importance. Barthes served on Baudrillard's dissertation committee and members of the group attended his seminars during these years. See: "Interview with Isabelle Auricoste," *Clip/Stamp/Fold: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X–197X*, pp. 197–200.

If the group's particular combination of image and text responded to the context of Paris, it also engaged an international architectural scene, including figures like Archigram, Cedric Price, Hans Hollein, Kisho Kurokawa, and Frei Otto. The group's international orientation was bolstered by early attention accorded to the group by the London-based magazine *Architectural Design*.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to a contemporary Parisian group like Claude Parent and Paul Virilio's Architecture Principe, *Utopie* refused to link their theoretical work with the design of architectural and urban projects. But neither did *Utopie* seek to leave the field of architecture and urbanism altogether. Rather, *Utopie* claimed an Althusserian notion of a "theoretical practice," whose central material was to be the contemporary discourses and representations of architecture and urbanism circulating both within their disciplines and in the popular press.<sup>14</sup> If one had to point to the keywords marking the group's theoretical practice, they would be urbanism, utopia, technology, and media: focal points that have served as the basis for the selection of texts within this volume.

### The Urban

*We are describing an institution whose doors are being closed, if they are not closed already. We are defining the strange ambiguity of "urbanism," a specialized and partial discipline and field that is struggling with its own contradictions and those of society as a whole.*<sup>15</sup>

By 1967 the critique of urbanism was hardly new. No longer confined to Lefebvre's seminars in Nanterre or to the pages of critical journals, it had attained a wider currency, as could be seen in Jean-Luc Godard's *Two or Three Things I Know about Her*, which appeared in cinemas that spring. Urbanism appeared as the benign face of a new, more total form of alienation, the mask of a class strategy to monopolize and contain the contradictions of postwar social development. Yet unlike Lefebvre, the *IS*, or Godard, the critique of architecture and urbanism in *Utopie* was one carried out by architects and urbanists, a type of autocritique developed from individuals implicated in the practice. If the tone of the group's writings was frequently militant, it was also at times fragile, an attempt to hold open a closing door, and to interrogate a discipline whose contradictions were seen to be those of society more generally.

13. Jean Aubert, Jean-Paul Jungmann, Antoine Stinco, Hubert Tonka, "Architecture as a Theoretical Problem," *Architectural Design* (June 1968) p. 255.

14. The particularly strong presence in *Utopie* of the term *pratique* (practice) carried a specific theoretical meaning: practice was used to denote the particular manner by which raw materials are transformed into specific products in the realm of economics, but also in the domains of politics, ideology, and theory. Louis Althusser's theorization of practice served as the source for the group's use of the term, and more particularly, Althusser's concept of theoretical practice, a form of transformation whose raw material were "representations, concepts, and facts," and was proposed as a means by which ideological formations might be broken up and transformed into scientific knowledge. See Althusser, "On the Materialist Dialectic," *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Vintage, 1969). See also: "Architecture as a Theoretical Problem," pp. 124–145, as well as "Architecture as a Theoretical Practice," and Tonka's "Critique of Urban Ideology," pp. 155–177.

15. Tonka, "Critique of Urban Ideology," p. 176.

If *Utopie* drew their material from the disposable realm of newspapers and magazines, advertisements and promotional brochures, their arguments ultimately took aim at the concrete history and development of urban legislation and practice. This took place in the magazine, but also in the form of pamphlets, such as *The Logic of Urbanism*, which served as punctual interventions distributed at professional conferences and meetings.<sup>16</sup>

The early 1960s had seen the rise of the discourse of “urbanisme spatial” in France, linked to the emerging concept of megastructure, and like it, to a broader wave of technological, speculative optimism.<sup>17</sup> Bold proposals at a massive urban scale were seen less as monuments, than as facilitating aspirations towards individual choice, flexibility, and change. In France, such speculative proposals were combined with a discourse of futurological forecasting dubbed “prospectivism,” in which the impending, dynamic transformation of urban life was contrasted with the insufficiency of an older, modernist rubric of functional zoning and statistical planning.<sup>18</sup> For *Utopie*, such visionary proposals appeared politically ambivalent, not so much providing an alternative as mirroring and amplifying the futurological orientation latent in the technocratic urban planning developed by the state in wake of Charles de Gaulle’s return to power in 1958.<sup>19</sup> “Spatial” or “visionary” urbanism were but another facet of more normative and bureaucratic forms of urbanism; in both cases urbanists were caught in a “vortex,” consigned to the project of “[reducing] social complexity to simple, easily manipulable elements at the level of the ‘urban’ plan.”<sup>20</sup>

*The Logic of Urbanism*, together with other analyses of urbanism in the first three issues of *Utopie*, sought by contrast to distinguish between “the urban,” (l’urbain) and the city, or more particularly, from the urban and representations of the city deployed by contemporary urbanism. In close dialogue with the ideas of Lefebvre, the group identified “the urban” with the massive explosion and reorganization of the built fabric effected under industrial capitalism through the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a wave of development that destructured and exceeded the historical

16. *La Logique de l’urbanisme*, (1967), *L’Argent de l’urbanisme*, (1969), and the poster *Utopie ne s’écrit pas au futur*, (1969) were produced for and distributed at specific events. Other pamphlets, such as *Des raisons de l’architecture*, expanded existing texts that the group produced so as to address the debates surrounding the reformulation of architectural education in the wake of May 1968. Still others, such as *Urbaniser la lutte de classe*, gathered together and recirculated short texts that the group had produced in disparate contexts. See Chronological Bibliography, pp. 321–323.

17. The term “megastructure” was coined in 1964 by the Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki. Reyner Banham, the first historian to chronicle the movement, included a survey of “urbanisme spatial” in his *Megastructure: Urban Futures of the Recent Past* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976). See also: Fumihiko Maki, *Investigations in Collective Form* (St. Louis: Washington University School of Architecture, 1964). On “urbanisme spatiale” see Larry Busbea, *Topologies: The Urban Utopia in France, 1960–1970* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007).

18. The key critic to frame spatial urbanism in the terms of “prospectivisme” was Michel Ragon. See: Michel Ragon, *Où Vivrons-Nous Demain?* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1963).

19. A key landmark of this planning was the *Schéma directeur d’aménagement et d’urbanisme de la région de Paris* (1965) developed under the direction of Paul Delouvrier. Delouvrier, who embraced the forecasting visions of prospectivist discourse, was appointed by De Gaulle to administer the replanning of Paris following his role in directing the so-called Constantine Plan from 1958–1960 during the Algerian war. Attempting to steer the course of Parisian development over the next forty years, the *Schéma* effectively doubled the metropolitan area and broke it up into seven suburban regions, foreseeing the creation of new satellite town centers, a new regional commuter train network (the RER) and an extensive highway system. See: Délégation générale au district de la région de Paris, *Schéma directeur d’aménagement et d’urbanisme de la région de Paris* (Paris: 1966), and Pierre Lavedan, *Histoire de l’urbanisme à Paris* (Paris: Hachette, 1975).

20. *Utopie*, *The Logic of Urbanism*, pp. 117.

city, ushering in a new condition in which former oppositions—city and country, center and periphery, nature and culture—collapsed. The urban was a more weakly distributed and unstable mixture than the city, but it also contained new typologies (dormitory suburbs, factories, university campuses, housing estates) as well as new “urban practices” that continually altered the urban fabric. The unstable nature of the “urban crisis,” as it was frequently termed at the time, was to be seen, *Utopie* insisted, not solely as disorder but as the locus of unpredictable and revolutionary transformation.

Tonka’s “Critique of Urban Ideology” (*Utopie* 2/3) thus proposed to define “city” as an ensemble of urban practices—the product of struggle between groups and classes—rather than as a particular type of “space.”<sup>21</sup> Lefebvre, in “From Urban Science to Urban Strategy,” (*Utopie* 2/3) raised the stakes further, arguing that urbanization was not a byproduct of industrialization, but rather that industrialization was a stage within a global process of urbanization.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, postwar urban planning could no longer be regarded, as a liberal, humanist “art” of city building, nor as the scientific planning claimed by a technocratic administration; but rather, as the ideological and practical apparatus developed to manage and direct the “mutation” of industrial society into urban society. Lefebvre called for the use of philosophical concepts to address practical political issues, to replace urbanism’s pretention to scientificity with the active construction of urban strategies.<sup>23</sup>

The group highlighted the demand for “synthetic coherence,” as a chief trait of the ideological apparatus of urbanism, a demand expressed in State planning documents but also in the prospectuses of private developments such as “Paris 2,” the first shopping mall to be realized in France.<sup>24</sup> Behind the State’s urbanistic ideology of “synthesis” and its private mirror, the project of restoring the city’s coherence was the projection of particular and partial concepts of the city (whether formal studies, analyses of traffic, or growth forecasts) onto a larger urban reality. In contrast to a project of social segregation for the sake of consumption, they looked to the unintegrated and unstable diversity of existing “urban practice,” the residual means of using, producing, and transforming the urban fabric, that urbanism threatened to liquidate. Rather than draw distinctions at the level of urban design or urban form, what needed analysis and critique, they argued, were the more fundamental political and economic goals underpinning the institutional framework of urbanism under de Gaulle, from the creation of documents like the “Code of Urbanism” to legal instruments such as the Zones à Urbaniser en Priorité (ZUP) (Priority Development Zones).<sup>25</sup>

21. Tonka, “Critique of Urban Ideology,” pp. 155–177.

22. Lefebvre, “From Urban Science to Urban Strategy,” pp. 180–208.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 180–208.

24. “Paris 2,” whose name was changed following legal action to “Parly 2,” was completed in 1969. Not only the first shopping mall in France, it included a private housing development envisioned for 20,000 inhabitants; promoting itself as a form of urbanism, capable of reproducing the lifestyle of the metropolis within an orderly, efficient private suburban enclave. The same example would serve as the conclusion to Lefebvre’s *Le Droit à la ville*, published the following year. In both cases, the example took on particular importance as an example of the complementary relationship between the legal apparatuses mobilized by the Gaullist state and the role of private development in the realization of the urban fabric.

25. See *The Logic of Urbanism*, pp. 111–123.

### Utopia

*Utopia has become the emasculated expression of the tensions that reveal a conflictual reality.*<sup>26</sup>

Utopie starkly criticized the formalization of utopia as one of the central illusions masking conflicts within advanced industrial societies, yet the group nonetheless held onto the category. One of the group's most concerted statements on the subject took the form of a poster distributed at the conference *Utopie e/o Rivoluzione*, a meeting organized by students and assistants in the faculty of architecture at the University of Turin in the Spring of 1969.<sup>27</sup> There Utopie joined and entered into sharp conflict with a diverse cast, which included Archigram, Archizoom, Yona Friedman, and Paolo Soleri, among others. Where many utopian schemes of the period were projected into the near or distant future, Utopie's utopias were more frequently drawn from the past: the Paris Commune's attempt to suppress the Ecole des Beaux Arts in 1871, the speculative descriptions of Paris found in writings of the forbidden, prerevolutionary author Louis-Sébastien Mercier, or the utopian socialism of Charles Fourier. Utopias appeared equally in the guise of cautionary fables, as in Lourau's citation of Jose Luis Borges's brief fragment "On Rigor in Science" (*Utopie 1*), a parable in which the imperial cartographers' quest for ultimate rigor—a map the size of the territory—crumbles into absurd ruin. Utopia appeared not in what was just beyond the horizon, but rather in what was lacking in the present.<sup>28</sup> For Utopie, utopia was less the "good place" (*eu-topos*) than the "no place" (*ou-topos*), a place whose existence could not be located on any map.

If the group's negative definition of utopia could appear nostalgic, it was motivated by an attempt to comprehend the place of criticism within the historical process. In the fragmentary text "Dialectical Utopia" (*Utopie 1*), utopia was born from thoughts that found no possibility of realization within the existing order, and yet were ultimately appropriated, transformed, and integrated to that order.<sup>29</sup> As a dialectic, the negation and integration of utopia was not total and without remainder, but rather a process that dislodged revolutionary possibilities that were previously unforeseeable.<sup>30</sup>

Hence the description of the negative conception of utopia also as a "phase of theoretical construction."<sup>31</sup> The emphasis upon construction stresses the

26. "Utopia is not written in the future tense," p. 241.

27. See *Marcatti: Rivista di Cultura Contemporanea*, no. 50–55, (1969).

28. "What constitutes the urban," Lourau noted, "is as much what is lacking in the city as what it offers." Lourau, "Outlines of Urbanism as a Critical System of Thought," pp. 29–46.

29. The "rehabilitation" of utopia had taken on increasing importance in Lefebvre's reflections on contemporary urbanism beginning of the early 1960s. See: "Utopie expérimentale: Pour un nouvel urbanisme," *Revue Française de Sociologie*, Vol. 2, No. 3. (Jul.–Sep. 1961) pp. 191–198; "Introduction," *L'Habitat Pavillonnaire*, ed. Raymond Haumont, et. al. (Paris: Centre de recherche d'urbanisme, 1966), and "Propositions" *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, (June–July 1967), p. 16. Philosopher and historian Françoise Choay also placed particular emphasis upon the role of nineteenth-century utopian socialism in generating key urban concepts of the twentieth century in *L'Urbanisme: utopies et réalités, une anthologie* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1965).

30. "Dialectical Utopia," pp. 62–63.

31. "Dialectical Utopia," p. 63.



formation of theory rather than the application of doctrine, it mirrors Utopie's own desire to place themselves in a provisional, blank spot within the era's intensely factional Gauchiste politics; it evokes the disparate materiality of an intellectual project assembled from the contrasts between fashion advertisements and sociology, police bulletins and works of philosophy; but it also speaks to the recurrence of architecture, both metaphoric and literal, within the group's writings. The attempt to engage architecture was at its most explicit in "Architecture as a Theoretical Problem," a text which addressed the ex-ENSBA in the wake of the school's closure in 1968, a moment of intense debate regarding the future of architectural teaching and practice.<sup>32</sup> Published in *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui* in September 1968, and quickly expanded and republished in the pamphlet *Des raisons de l'architecture*, the text described the need to "disassemble/dismantle (démonter) the economic, political, social and cultural manifestations of architecture."<sup>33</sup> To emphasize dismantling was to model ideology not upon visual illusion, but rather upon a structure whose logic could be taken apart. Not by chance, the term was also central to a preoccupation with demountable construction within the group, a fascination with how processes of disassembly had been interpreted in the realm of architectural production. To disassemble the manifestations of architecture, they argued, ran contra to the Beaux-Arts understanding of architecture as an "oeuvre," "creation," or "synthesis," but also questioned the sufficiency of emerging ex-Beaux-Arts slogans, which sought to define architecture as "a service to the people" or simply as "a political act."<sup>34</sup> In the end, Utopie's "rhetoric of disassembly" was an attempt to understand architecture as a particular type of product. Grasping architecture as a product demanded in turn a different conception of architecture as a technical and social production, one that could come to grips with architecture's place within a changing postwar consumer society.

### Technics

*In any era, technical knowledge and its use has divided the social body into distinct areas, categories, zones of privilege.*<sup>35</sup>

If Utopie were unsparing in their critique of technocratic planning, their position was not anti-technological. The group collectively wrestled

32. The version published in this volume appeared in *L'architecture d'aujourd'hui* in September 1968, and was republished in March of 1969 as *Des raisons de l'architecture*. Both texts developed out of a much shorter text published in *Architectural Design* in June 1968. The ministry of culture officially dissolved the ENSBA in August 1968, and until the government-mandated creation of five schools known as *Unités Pédagogiques* (Pedagogical Units) to replace the ENSBA system in January 1969, the future shape of architectural education in France remained uncertain. In protest over the government-mandated UP, over 1200 students and teachers refused to join the system, and were turned into a supplementary school known as "UP6."

33. Utopie, *Des raisons de l'architecture*, pp. 124–145.

34. Utopie, *Des raisons de l'architecture*, pp. 127.

35. Baudrillard, "Technics as Social Practice," pp. 209.

with the Lefebvrian slogan "All technics in the service of everyday life," as can be seen from the exchanges between Auricoste, Aubert, Baudrillard, Goldblum, Jungmann, and Stinco that make up much of *Utopie 2/3*.<sup>36</sup> Not unlike the rhetoric of disassembly enunciated in "Architecture as a Theoretical Problem," the magazine's larger reflection centered on the relationship between technological forces and a collective social imaginary.<sup>37</sup> Such an emphasis sheds a different light on the group's interest in pneumatics, most famously, the panoply of objects and devices assembled for the exhibition "Structures Gonflables" in 1968.<sup>38</sup> Seen from such a perspective, the fascination with inflatable technology appears less about the poetics of air, than about the place of pneumatics within the longer technical and social history of demountable construction.<sup>39</sup> Jean Aubert's "Becoming Outdated," (*Utopie 1*) traces just such a lineage, from the Crystal Palace to Cedric Price's Fun Palace, as evidence of architecture's unsettled place within an expanding logic of obsolescence. Antoine Stinco's image-text "Art?...!" (*Utopie 1*) poached pages from journals of industrial aesthetics and furniture catalogues, the *Ford Guide to Styling*, and magazines like *Domus* and *Art International*, to outline its own "system of objects," reminiscent of the importance of furniture systems and design objects within Baudrillard's contemporaneous book of the same name.<sup>40</sup> If qualities of mobility and ephemerality were frequently aligned with claims to liberation within architecture and urbanism during these years, for *Utopie* they also testified to a more radical generalization of obsolescence as a norm. In such an evolution, the forces of industrial mass production appeared to transcend not only the physical deterioration of commodities, but the even more powerful and immaterial force of stylistic obsolescence. As the physical combination of objects into "systems" within the period's architecture and design discourse seemed driven not by logic, but by regimes of signification, they appeared no longer as simply the reification of social relationships by the magical agency of commodity fetishism, but rather as the manifestation of an emerging, and more radically superficial, yet encompassing, form of sign exchange value.<sup>41</sup>

36. See for instance, the passage on urban strategy in Lefebvre's "From Urban Science to Urban Strategy," pp. 180–208.

37. In French the term "technique" is capable of denoting technique (the particularity by which a task is executed), an individual technology, as well as technics, the larger combination of habits, ideas, and practices shaping technological development.

38. The exhibition provided an extensive industrial inventory, including everything from hovercraft, gazometers, and high-altitude weather balloons to medical equipment and beach toys, and ran from March 1–30, 1968, at the Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris. During the exhibition two conferences were held, bringing the group into contact with figures such as Cedric Price, who was involved in similar research into pneumatics. Also of note is the catalogue essay "Essai sur technique et société," which prefigures the reflection on technique within *Utopie 2/3*.

39. Demountable construction would have been a part of the pedagogy within the Atelier of Edouard Albert, where Aubert, Jungmann, and Stinco, met as students. Albert was a specialist in light metal construction and was friendly with Jean Prouvé, who was brought to the atelier as a guest critic. Aubert, Jungmann, and Stinco also sought out the instruction of David-Georges Emmerich, who had developed an extensive series of proposals for lightweight, demountable structures from the late 1950s onwards.

40. Jean Baudrillard, *Le Système des objets* (Paris: Gallimard, 1968), translated as *The System of Objects* (London: Verso Books, 1996).

41. See Baudrillard, *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), translated as *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 1981).

## Death and the Media

*Everything seems to depend on the treatment of death.*<sup>42</sup>

If power had wavered in 1968, it had not fallen, and while unrest and labor disruptions continued into the early 1970s, the prospect of revolutionary transformation appeared increasingly distant. Amidst the violent radicalization of factions on the far left and the slow reconstitution of power, the tenor of *Utopie* itself shifted and hardened, turning towards themes of violence, pollution, and death. In 1970, Jean Aubert and Jean Baudrillard traveled as part of a French delegation to the Aspen Design Conference, where Baudrillard produced the short statement “The Mystique of Environment.”<sup>43</sup> Aspen organizers placed the concept of environment at the center of the design agenda that year, a move which Baudrillard and Aubert saw as complicit with the rising political emphasis upon pollution and contamination, redirecting attention from internal social conflict and external foreign wars, in an attempt to reunify a fractured body politic against a common enemy.<sup>44</sup> Recalling that year’s conference, the architectural historian and Aspen chronicler Reyner Banham noted it as particularly fractious, a turning point that exposed “a gulf across which only shouting, not dialogue, was possible.”<sup>45</sup> 1970 would mark a turning point for *Utopie* as well. That year the magazine’s publisher, Anthropos Editions, launched *Espaces et Sociétés*, a more academic journal of urban sociology, and the group, who had already quarreled with the publisher over the periodicity and price of the magazine, struck out on their own. The original group, increasingly scattered amongst a range of institutions created after May 1968, was also by this time beset by internal conflicts.<sup>46</sup> By early 1971, Aubert, Jungmann, and Stinco, feeling there was no longer room for the architectural problematic within *Utopie*, left the group.<sup>47</sup>

42. “Codicil,” (U 4) p. 277.

43. In Reyner Banham’s *The Aspen Papers: Twenty Years of Design Theory from the International Design Conference in Aspen*, the text, attributed simply to the “French group,” was republished as “The Environmental Witch Hunt.” While they were not involved in drafting the statement, the members of the delegation included François Barré, Gilles de Bure, Henri Ciriani, Claude and Françoise Braunstein, Alain Fischer, Odile Hanappe, Eric Le Comte, Roger and Nicole Tallon. The text also appeared as “Du scoutisme au napalme,” in *Robbo* 5/6 (1971), 53.

44. On the political redefinition of the term “environment” within architecture, from the general notion of surrounding to that of natural ecology, see Reinhold Martin, “Environment, c. 1973,” *Grey Room* 14 (Winter, 2004), pp. 78–101, and Florian Charvolin, “1970: L’année clef pour la définition de l’environnement en France,” *La revue pour l’histoire du CNRS*, no. 4 (2001), accessed January 15, 2011. URL : <http://histoire-cnrs.revues.org/3022>.

45. See: Reyner Banham, *The Aspen Papers: Twenty Years of Design Theory from the International Design Conference in Aspen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974).

46. Tonka taught at the Institut de l’urbanisme and helped to found the urban planning department at the experimental university of Vincennes, established in 1969 in response to demands for university reform. He also continued to engage with the ex-ENSBA through “cours sauvages,” public classes organized in supermarkets, offices, and neighborhoods by striking architecture students, in the fall and winter of 1969–70. Jungmann taught at the short-lived Unité d’Enseignement et de Recherche sur l’Environnement in the partially demolished Les Halles market, before returning to the UP6 at the former Ecole des Beaux Arts, where he founded the “workshop for graphic expression” known as ZZZ. Aubert briefly taught courses on urbanism and communication at Vincennes, where he started the short-lived magazine *Rufus*, before returning to UP6 in the early 1970s. Baudrillard remained at the sociology faculty in Nanterre until the mid-1980s.

47. Aubert, Jungmann, and Stinco continued to practice together in the firm Aerolande until the mid 1970s. The three collaborated again with members of *Utopie* in the magazine *Livre de Pierres*, four issues of which were edited by Jungmann and Aubert between 1977 and 1983.

Thus, when the fourth issue of *Utopie* appeared in late 1971, it was with a smaller editorial group and in a more modest, standard pamphlet format.<sup>48</sup> Published by the Imprimerie Quotidienne, a printing and publishing house founded by Tonka, the magazine retained its signature typography—designed by Auricoste in 1967—but lost the “critical column” so important to the early issues.<sup>49</sup> From then on, texts in *Utopie* were printed mostly unsigned, with individual authorship subsumed to the collective enterprise. The covers were printed in bright, artificial colors and the interior typography was set on tinted paper in contrasting ink, a relationship that changed with each issue. It is tempting to see *Utopie*’s late-Pop exterior as a cheerful, protective mask for the growing somberness of its themes, which proceeded in tandem with a redoubled theoretical ambition. The group’s focus upon death and excess was in tune with the broader intellectual climate emerging in the 1970s, whether in the renewed interest in the writings of Georges Bataille, or in Michel Foucault’s turn towards the biopolitical spaces of hospitals and prisons.<sup>50</sup> If death marked a theoretical horizon, it was one constantly refracted through the more immediate prism of contemporary events, from the shooting of activist Pierre Overney in 1971 (“Codicil,” *Utopie* 4), to the terrorist attacks at the Munich Olympics in 1972, the protracted demise of Franco, and the controversy over the suicide of the leaders of the Red Army Faction in 1977 (“We Are all Stuffed, like Animals,” *Utopie* 18). If death seems to displace utopia during this later phase of the magazine, the group remained devoted to a project of thinking about phenomena that were stubbornly inassimilable to the existing order of things.

The magazine also sought to intervene in other theoretical debates during these years, notably surrounding the status and use of mass media, and regarding concepts central to Marxist theory itself. In “Requiem for the Media,” Baudrillard challenged both the “strategic illusion” that media could be liberated from capitalist monopoly, as well as the “technological idealism” of Marshall McLuhan’s global village.<sup>51</sup> In place of mass media’s simulated responses and feedback loops, Baudrillard defended a more fundamental, antagonistic reciprocity and response between subjects. If the lure of the increasingly relentless, sophisticated, and seductive enclosure described in Baudrillard’s later writings on simulacra are already apparent, he retains at this point the possibility of responding to such powerful forces.

48. Altogether *Utopie* appeared in three different formats between 1967 and 1978. Issues 1–3 were 22.5 cm x 18 cm, issues 4–15, as well as the pamphlets, were 22.5 cm x 14 cm; and issues 16–18 were 28 cm x 19 cm.

49. In 1969 Tonka purchased a printing machine, which was housed with other machines belonging to an anarchist group in Montrouge for a short period before moving to the rue Clavel in Paris’ nineteenth arrondissement. By 1972, Imprimerie Quotidienne, which by this time included Auricoste and Nicolis Politis, moved to Fontenay-sous-bois, where Tonka and Auricoste continued to operate it until 1991.

50. See for instance, Denis Hollier, *La prise de la concordie: essais sur Georges Bataille*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), translated as *Against Architecture*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989); Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), translated as *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977); and Jean Baudrillard, *L’échange symbolique et la mort* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), translated as *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1993).

51. Baudrillard was responding specifically to Hans-Magnus Enzensberger’s “Constituents for a Theory of the Media,” which appeared in the *New Left Review* in December of 1970.

The limits of Marxist theory in adequately accounting for the nature and influence of mass media noted in "Requiem for the Media" prefigures the more radical critique of a Marxist conception of production in "The Mirror of Production" (*Utopie* 6). Here Baudrillard questions both Marx's idea of production, but also various post-'68 attempts to expand and redefine production, from the "textual productivity" outlined in *Tel Quel* to the desiring-machines theorized by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Baudrillard proposed that the relationship between use value and exchange value in Marx be understood by analogy with Jacques Lacan's theory of the mirror-stage, as a formative, imaginary, outside of which man "can no longer think of himself other than as something to produce, to transform, to make visible as value."<sup>52</sup> While the centrality of production in Marx, Baudrillard argued, "persuaded men that they are alienated by the sale of their labor power," it simultaneously censured "the much more radical hypothesis that they could be alienated as labor power."<sup>53</sup>

Caught up in such a play of mirrors, in the later phase of *Utopie* almost every opposition comes to take on a highly uncertain status, including the very notion of "radicality." "Revolutionary Exoticism," (*Utopie* 9 "Radical Follies") sharply commented on the manner in which national liberation struggles in emerging nations served an increasingly compensatory function for radical groups within Europe. Alongside such extended reflections were shorter, punctual observations regarding the softening of once frozen Cold War oppositions, from the convergence of US and Soviet satellites ("Satellites and Ideograms," *Utopie* 13), to electoral indecision across Western Europe ("There's no more government," *Utopie* 9), to the seeming "nonevent" that marked the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam ("War Scenario," *Utopie* 13).

In the course of its decade-long run, from the initial emphasis upon urbanism, architecture, and technology to its final concentration upon the mass media and political events, the reflection on both liberation and power within *Utopie* changed drastically. It passed from an exploded urban condition, understood as the new battleground of class struggles, to a domain of escalating symbolic contestation, in which more total forms of media simulation faced off with more extreme manifestations of political violence. If this shift brought with it an increasing skepticism about liberation, its complement was a deeper consideration of the interiorization and normalization of power's operation in both contemporary communication networks and in the body politic. The journal itself vividly reveals the particular objects and phenomena, drawn from architecture, urbanism, industrial design, art, mass media, and current events, which formed the concrete basis from which the group's theoretical "models" were extrapolated. If the perspective appeared increasingly bleak, the continued existence of *Utopie* can itself be seen as a commitment to claiming the possibility of a response.

— Craig Buckley

52. "The Mirror of Production," p. 282

53. "The Mirror of Production," p. 289