

FROM CITY 'DYSTOPIA' TO DESIGN 'UTOPIA'?
A STUDY OF UTOPIAN ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPTS IN
FACING PRESENT DAY CITY DYSTOPIA

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ABSTRACT

"There is nothing like a dream to create the future. Utopia to-day, flesh and blood tomorrow"

-Victor Hugo

Utopia and Dystopia is a long-standing discourse in the field of philosophy from antiquity. Both Utopian and Dystopian concepts have been discussed in terms of social, political, economic, religious, technological, and natural aspects throughout this discourse.

In the architectural discourse, Dystopia in the manmade environment has been discussed in light of 'war and violence', 'the collapse of infrastructure/ technological failure', 'natural catastrophes' such as floods, famine, drought, and 'pandemics' as they shape and reshape the built environmental continuously.

A study has been carried out by revisiting distinct utopian architectural concepts in the architectural discourse in search of insights for possible futuristic architectural approaches towards predicted natural disasters that would otherwise result in city dystopia; bad places in the city. Further, it was intended to see the possibility of consciously validating the weight of these numerous utopian concepts to address urban dystopia. The research was carried out by reviewing relevant literature and case studies produced on the theme.

The impact of the utopian conceptual works of architects on design solutions will be evaluated based on the 'emotional utopian ideals' and 'physical utopian ideals' used. Thereby gaining an insight into the importance of utopian concepts as a theoretical base for contemporary thinking which is, by present-day practical circumstances, required to design for extreme scenarios of dystopia.

This specific study revealed that the city dystopia, the 'ultimate bad place/situation', can become the 'ultimate resource' for the architect to

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create 'utopian solutions'. The essay outcomes could be progressively applied to probe into the dystopia resulted in city and city life during Covid-19 pandemic; the distress cities went through and the utopian concepts that could be generated towards alleviating them in future recurrence.

Keywords: Utopia, Dystopia, City and City life, Natural Catastrophe, Pandemic