When the city of Brasilia was built in Brazil, it transformed from a utopia in Costa's and Niemeyer's minds and drawings into an inconvenient space, destined to fail from the moment of its utopian conception, inevitably rendered as unrealistic. Utopia assumes permanence instead of sustainability that requires constant adaptation to new circumstances.. If there is no space for trial and error in utopia, the minute it is materialized it will ultimately collapse. At the end, it's more about a wish than an expectation.

The only architectural product I know of, which disregards its utopian character, is Andreas Angelidakis' "Walking Building". The hybrid hyperbuilding was conceptually derived from an existing '50s factory in Athens that was slated to be repurposed into the National Museum of Contemporary Art. In opposition to this obsolete vision for urban development, Angelidakis' building– which is formed by a cloud of data– grows legs and walks away.

When I reached out to Angelidakis through Facebook chat about his thoughts on utopia and reality, his reply was on point: "utopia has shifted into a sense of longing for the time when you had the luxury of longing for something or someone. Now everything is here all the time."

When he coined *Utopia* in 1516, Thomas More assembled the greek expressions *ou*, which means "no", and *topos*, which means "place". In this term, he defined a perfect society that does not exist in any real place and eventually will remain unrealized. Although utopia means *ou-topia*, it is indeed located in a very specific place, the *mental* one.

During a lecture in last summer's SOMA program in Mexico City, I came across George Perec's statement: "Behind utopia there is always some taxonomic design: a place for each thing and each thing in its place." During that time my phone was a mental map, a collection of favored destinations *curated* to provide a comfortable experience based on familiar-looking places. Screenshots of Google maps, emails, books I wanted to buy, furniture I wanted to buy as well, schedules of newly explored yoga studios, and of course things to see and places to eat in a city that I was struggling to customize for my purposes. Reading Perec's aphorism, I realised two things:

A. The reason I travelled to Mexico was to explore a place and culture entirely new to me. In spite of this, I had already spent a month planning, leaving no room for chance, for difference, for the miscellaneous. Everything was in order and order reigned. I had planned my own depressive utopia.

B. Utopia is a mental dystopia fed by nostalgic projections on a reconstructed past or a distant locale. It rarely occupies a present time and real place but, rather, an imaginary past, an invented present in a faraway site, the future, or the world of fantasy.

For my contribution to SOMA's annual publication, I came up with *Indexifying Utopia*. On top of a screenshot of the screenshot folder of my phone, I scanned two postcards I found at local flea markets. The one on top shows a resort in Cuernavaca and below the Athens Hilton hotel. Both photos were photographed around the '70s, an era when the concept of utopia thrived, manifested in the traveller's longing for a controlled and structured adventure.

Escape and, at the same time, comfort characterize utopia. This oversimplified world of dualities is the playing field for the ego, the only satisfied tenant of utopia. The ego's conditioned character can freely fall into the fantasy and the impossibility of effective realization. The decisive nature of utopia, relies on the preservation of the distance between itself and reality. It's the ultimate condition I fool myself with– like chasing my shadow, it moves away as I approach.

For Paul Ricoeur, a utopic vision is treated as a kind of schizophrenic attitude towards society: a way to escape the logic of action through a construction outside history, and as a protest against any kind of verification by means of concrete realization. Thus, the vision of utopia as social hygiene becomes as oppressive as the ruling social order and its authority that created it.

That being said, utopia can be a good thing when we see it for what it really is: *the pure present moment*. Utopia is right here, right now, in full awareness. It's about what is happening, not what we think is happening.

The need for action presupposes that we have to get rid of a lot of old baggage, the noise in our heads. It's about letting go of our dated, limiting belief structures– our comfortable neuroses, self-defeating habits, and patterns. None of these serve us in utopia. If we want utopia to exist, we have to live in the present. ♥

IMG: *Indexifying Utopia*, in dialogue with George Perec essay Think/Classify (1985), 2016