

# Architecture and built utopia. Icons and symbols in the rural landscape of J.N.Ledoux.

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## Abstract

This paper tries to connect together the architectural interest in utopia and the ideal condition of the countryside. In the work of utopists as well as in some works of the visionary architects, the idea of accomplishing an ideal dimension in planning the society or in conceiving the structure of architectural space, the so-called rural utopia, is often exercised.

Firstly this paper testifies to the growing interest in the many aspects related to the concept of space in the architecture of utopia. So it intends to analyse, on architectural production, some models of spatial exploration in order to open the study of utopian literature to new lines of inquiry. Classical social utopias are among the main sources of the discipline of architecture.

Then it proposes to think of utopias not as fictional texts about future change, but as basic element in a cultural and productive process through which social, spatial and subjective identities are formed.

Finally utopias can thus be read as textual systems implying a distinct spatial and temporal dimension; as 'spatial practices' that tend to naturalize a cultural and social construction. By examining the French context, and the period of the Enlightenment, it was considered as a case-study the project of C.N.Ledoux for the Royal Saltworks, and its evolution towards the utopian dimension of the city of Chaux.

**Keywords:** Ideal settlement, rural ideology, visionary architecture, rural structure, Chaux, C.N.Ledoux