

Supervisor's Report

Discursive Representations of *Cité-Jardin* through Hygienism and Socialism (1919-1950): Student Theses at *Institut d'Urbanisme de l'Université de Paris*, EHESS, Paris 2014, 111 p.

Boya Wei

The master thesis is a result of interest of Boya Wei in Michel Foucault's theory of disciplination through the discourse and power. The student wished to study the possibilities of application of the foucauldian discursive analysis on the elitist (expert) discourse about the social housing and hygienisation of the city in the second half of the 19th century. In course of her study, Boya focused first on theoretical literature in urban studies, and on the search for sources. This has led her to twist her focus to later period, to the first half of the 20th century, and particularly to the more advanced thinking about housing for non-privileged urban classes. Thus she has arrived to study the texts on urbanism, particularly representations of *cité-jardin*. She perceives the discourse on *cité-jardin* as a tool which provides her insight into the process of re-appropriations of hygienist and socialist discourses. The author is for this goal inspired by the constructivism of Henri Lefebvre (which she highlights in the introduction, recalls in conclusions). To fulfill this task the candidate has chosen to analyze corpus of texts composed of ten theses written by students of the Institute of Urbanism at the University of Paris, as final papers to conclude their studies and obtain a university diploma. The selected theses have in common an interest in some version of garden city interpretation.

The master thesis delivered by Boya Wei is organized in three parts: introduction which informs about the literature, sources, and method chosen for their analysis. The second part focused the Institute of Urbanism, its journal, departments, and consequently students whose works were to be analyzed. The third part is organized thematically, along several axes which should be facilitating the discursive analysis of the ten *mémoires de maîtrise*. These are plurality of urban forms, city as a laboratory of ideas, hygienism and aesthetics, social services and surveillance, class, race, and gender. Last not least the urbanism of Vichy period is envisioned as well.

I appreciate very much Boya's interest in European philosophy, urban studies, and the desire to learn how to apply the concepts. Particularly the foucauldian discursive analysis. I appreciate the chapter narrating the history of social care for public housing. Very positively can be appreciated the student's cultivated writing, and care for academic English, although too many mistakes show that it was not edited enough.

Overall the thesis is coherent and logically organized however there are also aspects, which I see rather critically. It is the methodological introduction which is not clearly formulating how the discursive analysis is going to be applied and unclearly organized is also the third part which was supposed to perform the analysis. This part is most problematic. I expected that after the exposure of the Institute of Urbanism, its professors, and its journal, will follow presentation of the selected ten master theses and their content analysis. The way it is presented now is omitting the analysis for the sake of an attempt of synthesis. I would have preferred to read very simple analysis of the student works, and in the second step identification of the expert discourses of the period or institution. I think that in such way the reader would be able to follow the author when she is formulating her conclusions about the common trend within this institution.

The thesis nevertheless can be presented for defense. It is a serious work with notable errors, which can be graded as "good" (12 – 13/20 in French scale.)

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