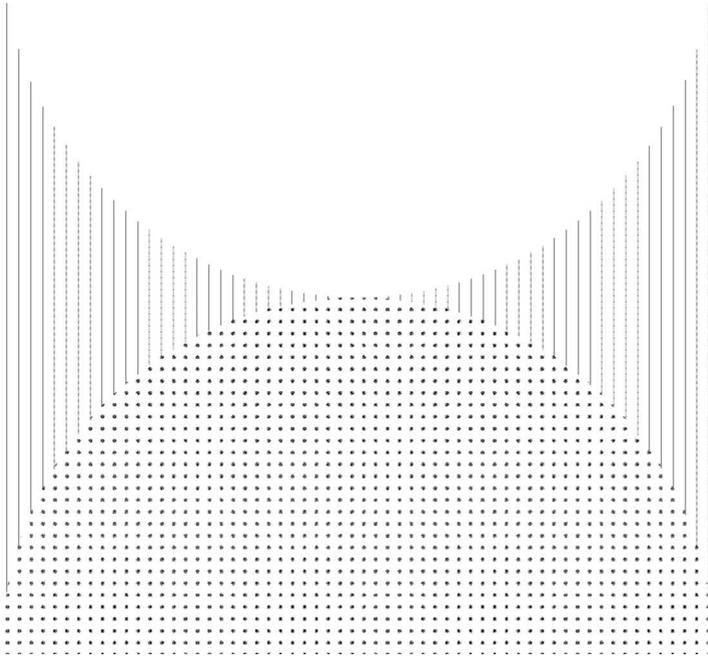# 4 Linking Utopianism, Crisis, and Architecture

"All major social changes are ultimately characterized by a transformation of space and time in the human experience." (Castells 2010, p. xxxi)

## 4.1  Crisis and Architecture: The Meaning of Architecture in Crisis Society

Being situated in material and conceptual worlds at once, architecture and crisis both refer to the social imaginary while existing in and affecting material realities of human beings in substantial ways. While crisis is not a material entity in itself, it nevertheless materialises through bodily performances and gets inscribed into the built environment. In fact, architecture, in some ways, *is* materialised crisis. The ways in which crisis plays out in architecture are therefore countless and could fill whole shelves in libraries. Below are some important considerations, which could be differentiated into two groups. The first set of questions reflects *Architecture in Crisis Society* and thus refers to the metaphysical exploration of the meaning of architecture in a society marked by crisis. The second could be defined as *Crisis in Architecture*, which is further split into two sub-aspects.

**Architecture in Crisis Society:**
If crisis is integral to the constitution of modern societies, what then is architecture's task in such a society? How is architecture relevant for the constitution of the modern subject that has turned crisis into an intrinsic condition of social being? How does architecture position itself in society? What are its tasks?

**Crisis in Architecture:**
If, however, crisis is such a fundamental part of society, how is architecture itself (as a discipline as well as its projects) then marked by crisis?

*Crisis in Architecture as a Discipline:*
Refers to its institutions[1] and practices. If society is crisis-ridden and architecture is made of social practices, how do society's power relations

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1    Such as universities, museums, professional associations and organisations, unions, and advocacy groups.

such as patriarchal, imperial, and capitalist structures play out in architecture as a heavily institutionalised system? In what ways do belief systems and worldviews impact the discipline and its capacity to deal with crises?

*Crisis in architectural projects:*
Refers to architectural objects in the context of multiple crises. How do crises influence architectural design explicitly as well as implicitly? How does architecture react or respond to crisis?

The first inquiry into the relation between crisis and architecture, *Architecture in Crisis Society*, will be part of this subchapter, while the second, *Crisis in Architecture*, will be addressed throughout this book. Furthermore, there is a specific form of architecture which is almost exclusively informed by crisis, namely *crisis architecture*, meaning buildings for catastrophes, conflict, and war. While such architecture is heavily informed by crisis, it is less so by utopianism: architecture for crisis-ridden environments is less concerned with building a better world as it is in *repairing* or *protecting from* the present one. Since this book explores architecture in relation to both crisis *and* utopianism, crisis architecture therefore is not part of this topic.

What thus is architecture? From a sociological, anthropological, and philosophical perspective, "architecture defines the world from the human centre, provides a place for human beings in the scheme of nature, and offers security and continuity for communal life." (Adam 2006, p. 120) From the viewpoint of the social sciences, space always contains symbolic meaning. This means that there exists no objective reality of the physical world since it is always subject to the human perspective and its interpretation. "At a[ny] given moment in time, materiality is both about the way we experience the tangible reality that surrounds us, from materials to light, and about our understanding of ourselves as subjects of this experience." (Picon 2020, p. 281, own insertion) This means, that even such a thing as nature does not exist as a 'natural' objective entity but is tied to symbolical value from the human standpoint.

Architecture thus (re)defines the human place in space and time. It is *through* architecture that human beings distinguish and position themselves in history and geography, thereby creating their own identity. Architecture is therefore a materialised form of the social imaginary, constantly changing (with) society. Contrary to historical perception, neither the social imaginary nor space are mere *reflections* of society, they *are* society: "space is not a reflection of society, it is its expression. […] space is not a photocopy of society, it is society." (Castells 2010, p. 441) Societal desires are expressed through architecture as a form of socio-cultural expression and artefact. According to Delitz (2010, 2015) and Castoriadis (2005 [1987]), in the same ways people of the Middle Ages were dependent on gothic cathedrals for their way of life, human beings of the 20th century would not have been the same without the reductionist modernist architecture, *constituting* society as a new form of function-oriented 'rational' collectivity. To both, architecture carries a *constituting feature* of society and enables society to bring itself *into existence* in the first place. However, while being *the point of departure* from which social, political, and economic processes take place, architecture simultaneously is the *result* of these processes. As such, architecture and socio-cultural practices are interdependent and presuppose each other (Schäfers 2012).

However, since representation has historically been the most obvious way for mediating knowledge and since architecture has from the very beginning been financed by those in power, it is through representation and therefore architecture's formal aspects that architecture has been used as a tool for expressing ideological values. Any monumental architecture can be described as "the externalization of knowledge through representation, which holds in unchanging form what is moving, changing and interconnected." (Adam 2006, p. 120) Based on claims of an eternal authenticity, architecture has therefore historically been associated with the freezing of time, as if materialisation could act as a safe haven for temporal movements. It is however representation, not space, which

is beyond movement and change (Adam 2006; Lefebvre 1997 [1974]; Massey 2005).[2]

The focus on representation meant that "[f]or a very long time, ornamentation represented one of the most evident means through which architecture was connected to political questions." (Picon 2020, p. 286) Meaning-making and transportation of collective values in architecture has thus historically been associated with symbols and signs, also referred to as the 'language' of architecture. Ornament, for example, was used to refer to social hierarchy, such as the rank of the owners, the meaning and use of the building or to other references in mythology, history, astronomy, physics, and the natural sciences. This was one of the reasons (besides serial production) for modernist attempts to rid architecture of all its symbolism. An ornament-free architecture, without any references to pre-existent knowledge or social hierarchy, would enable a classless society, according to the modernist assumption (Kaminer 2017). By the 1970s it was clear, however, that symbolic content was not restricted to ornament alone and that even modernist architecture, as any space, was not devoid of it. The attempt at its reduction to pure function therefore had just created a new type of symbolism. Quite interestingly, by the time post-modernist architects had deliberately returned to symbolism, they justified the use of symbols and signs as being a mere representation of a self-referential system with no meaning or agency. At the time when scholars like Althusser, Lefebvre, and Foucault had thus begun to widen the conception about the shaping of society, post-modernist architects had denied architecture its effects on society. Therefore, "while the understanding of the diverse factors and forces that shape society was widening, in architectural circles it was narrowing." (ibid., p. 10)[3]

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2    See *4.2 Architecture and Utopianism: Space and Projectivity* for a closer examination of the conceptualisation of space and its consequences.

3    What concerns the use of symbolism today, is that architecture critics have noticed the celebrated comeback of ornament once again. Ornament is back "but only on condition: ornament must function" (Levit 2008, p. 71). Furthermore, its contemporary revival tends to simulate organic structures, reflecting an at-

Meaning-making in architecture thus remained reduced to representation and the visual experience, a trend that continued to intensify alongside mediatised consumer culture. This has led many to argue that the built environment has in fact contributed to alienation and crisis instead of successfully grounding the human place in a world of uncertainty. To counter the sole focus on the visual senses, phenomenological approaches have therefore tried to bring attention back to the body, stressing that the task of architecture in creating a sense of belonging was created through a *multisensory* experience. "The suppression of the other sensory realms has led to an impoverishment of our environment, causing a feeling of detachment and alienation." (Pallasmaa 2007, book cover) According to Finnish architecture critic Juhani Pallasmaa, any architecture making us feel at home in the world, giving human situatedness meaning and order, would be an architecture enacting all of our bodily senses.

While the phenomenological approach shifts attention from the visual alone to architecture's materiality, it has been criticised for disregarding social processes and power structures (and thus the aspects that would relate architecture to crisis and society). Such theories would promote a supposedly universal physiological foundation and focus on individual subjective experiences, often in the search of something 'pure', 'authentic', or 'essential' to architecture (Crysler et al. 2012; Fischer 2012; Jormakka 2011a; Verschaffel 2012). While bodily senses are indeed subjective experiences, they are however equally constructed socially and historically (Schurr and Strüver 2016). Feelings and affect created through sensory experiences such as light and sound are therefore no individual or primitive traits but contain societal and political value (Picon 2020). They are relational phenomena, embedded in a network of human and non-human agents such as animals, nature, technologies, and other material artefacts. Buildings thus "tend to generate certain sensations and affects that are related to the way we think and act collectively." (ibid., p. 278) Feminist critics have therefore stressed to

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tempt of reconciling architecture with nature (see *5.3 Techno-Utopias: Utopianism 'Solving' Crisis* for more on this).

explore theories of affect which compliment representational theories (Schurr and Strüver 2016). Such *wider-than-representational* theories as put forward by Carolin Schurr and Anke Strüver seek to position the physical body within power structures, extending textual and visual representation with the lived experience, the everyday and ordinary, as well as the materiality and corporeality of the social. Such theories wish to overcome the dualism between the realistic-material and constructivist-cultural. The body therefore should be understood as a 'hinge' between corporeality and discursive power structures (ibid., p. 91). Essentially, these theories raise the question of how spatial structures can create a sense of belonging in crisis society and therefore offer a contemporary exploration of the meaning of architecture in a society marked by crisis.

There is however another fundamental aspect regarding architecture's role in crisis society, namely its role as the aesthetic dimension of neoliberal ideology according to contemporary ideology critique. While the physical organisation of space remains "the most direct and concrete means of communicating via materialised systems of self-representation" (Carlo 2005, p. 13), limiting ideology to representation alone has previously portrayed ideology as a mere illusion or distorted reality. Following Fredric Jameson (2013 [1983]) and Slavoj Žižek (2012 [1994]), ideology is however far more complex and equally lies beyond the representational. To explain this, Žižek (ibid., see also Lahiji 2011) refers to Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic concept of 'the Real', associated with the concept of trauma. In psychoanalysis, trauma refers not to something that happens 'in reality' but to a psychic event that prevents to see reality as it is. Trauma in this sense acts as a repressed memory causing pain and suffering which can however not be put into language. The Real therefore expresses the excess that lies beyond the symbolic and the imaginary, beyond the sayable and representable.

With this in mind, Žižek (ibid., see also Vighi and Feldner 2007) approaches ideology from a class-based analysis. He portrays ideology as a dialectical device between malleable ideas and a non-symbolisable traumatic kernel. To him, this traumatic kernel represents social antag-

onism,[4] the "'primordially repressed,' the irrepresentable X on whose 'repression' reality is founded" (Žižek cited in Lahiji 2011, p. 218). It is this traumatic, repressed antagonism around which, according to Žižek, social reality is structured, and which prevents society from stabilising itself into a harmonious whole.

It connects to architecture through Jameson's theory who contends that "the aesthetic act is itself ideological, and the production of aesthetic or narrative form is to be seen as an ideological act in its own right, with the function of inventing imaginary or formal 'solution' to irresolvable social contradiction." (Citing Jameson, ibid., p. 220) Žižek again comments on Jameson by saying that "we are not dealing with a longing for a real equality, but with the longing for a *proper appearance*." (Citing Žižek, ibid., emphasis by Žižek) Therefore, "there is a coded message in formal architectural play, and the message delivered by a building often functions as the 'return of the repressed' of the official ideology." (Citing Žižek, ibid., pp. 220–221) From this analysis Nadir Lahiji deduces that "[e]very architectural design, project or projection, is the *Imaginary Resolution of a Real Contradiction*." (ibid., p. 221, original emphasis) Form making in architecture today is therefore an attempt to come to terms with reality which is beyond solving. It allows to create an appearance of order for a society struck by crisis. As such architecture essentially represents a formal solution to being-in-crisis. In this sense, it becomes the task of ideology critique to 'demystify' aesthetics as an ideological act working through social antagonism. Including architecture in contemporary ideology critique is therefore an 'ethical responsibility': "the ideology critique of architecture is not a luxury but, rather, a necessity in linking architecture to the discourse of social *exchange*." (ibid., original emphasis)

On a broader societal level, there is another important aspect in contemporary ideology critique, which places ideology no longer on the level of *knowing* but on the level of *doing*. The subject today is therefore

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4     Referring to the concept of class struggle as defined by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2014 [2001]).

no longer motivated by the logic of reason following Kantian Enlightenment but cynicism, since "the cynical subject is well aware of the distance between the ideological mask and social reality, but still insisting upon the mask" (with reference to Sloterdijk, ibid., p. 221). Social reality is thus guided by a 'fetishistic inversion' in which people "very well know how things really are, but still they are doing it as if they did not know. The illusion is therefore double: it consists in overlooking the illusion which is structuring our real, effective relationship to reality. And this overlooked, unconscious illusion is what may be called *ideological fantasy*." (Žižek cited in ibid., p. 222, emphasis by Žižek) For Žižek this means, once again, that the fantasy is not just a *distorted* image of reality, it *is* the actual *lived* reality: The fundamental level of ideology "is not of an illusion masking the real state of things but that of an (unconscious) fantasy structuring our social reality itself." (Žižek cited in Andreotti and Lahiji 2017, p. 36) Since knowing alone does not dispel it, "we are fetishists in practice and not in theory." (ibid.)[5]

Nevertheless, since there *is* a part which *can* be expressed in society – the symbolic and imaginary – there is a part in society which can consciously be altered. Following Castoriadis' theory that society can reinstitute itself, "the need for a new radical imaginary, i.e. of instituting new imaginary significations and symbols, becomes imperative during moments of crisis and change" (with reference to Castoriadis, Kaika 2010, p. 457). Since it is through new imaginary significations and symbols that society enables to reposition itself, architecture has the possibility to offer the stage for a self-altering society in times of crisis. "In moments of political crises and economic instability, the symbolic 'effect' of architecture takes on an intensified degree of responsibility. Indeed, it is the 'reading' of architecture that begins to signify what is at stake, that is, what is considered to be important or not. [...] In times of crises, it could be argued that symbolism takes on a more heightened sense of meaning and urgency." (Hwang 2013)

If architecture's task is rendering human life meaningful, giving human beings a sense of order in the arrangement of the world, then the

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5      See Andreotti and Lahiji 2017 and Lahiji 2011 for an extended analysis.

demands have become quite high in a society increasingly marked by crisis, disorientation, and alienation. As has been mentioned, architecture in fact often contributes to a feeling of unease instead of eliminating it.[6] While there is no ready-made formula for how architecture could achieve a sense of well-being and belonging, it is clear, however, that the question of what implies a good life, which every architectural project implicitly gives an answer to, is a political endeavour. Most projects today imply that a good life is tied to the visual experience of the object and by further extent to the exchange value of a building. However, any architecture going after this quest in a more meaningful way, will most probably be an architecture firmly positioned in society's context(s); political and social, cultural and historical, geographical and temporal.

If, however, architecture has a 'task', then this is essentially about what architecture can 'do'. Asserting architecture *agency*[7] today however means overcoming deterministic and demiurgic ways of affecting society since "the experience of architecture is always multifaceted, open-ended, and ultimately ambiguous." (Picon 2020, p. 282) What architecture can *do* might thus be limited to less straightforward means such as creating atmosphere, orienting action, enabling situations, structuring places for inhabitation and co-habitation, or enhancing a feeling of grounding and inclusion. It can do this by simple architectural tools (of opening or closing, separating or uniting, making visible or invisible) employed in intelligent and context-relevant ways. Such decisions can be political, and for architecture critic Antoine Picon even "reorganize 'the distribution of the sensible', who and what can be seen and by whom in a given society." (With reference to Rancière, ibid., p. 286)[8] In this sense, in a society that has made crisis an integral part of social being and a

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6    See *5.1 Degenerate Utopias: Utopianism and the Disavowal of Crisis* for more on *technoaestethics* confusing the senses.

7    For more on agency see *6.1 Agency: Architecture's Political Dimension*.

8    For Jacques Rancière, the 'distribution of the sensible' refers to a repoliticised form of democracy in which people who cannot take part in politics are included by means of rendering the 'invisible visible' or creating 'a part for those who have no part' (see subchapter *4.3 Utopianism and Crisis: Time and Emancipation* for a closer examination).

way of life, architecture is most definitely beyond solving society's inherent struggles. Architecture can therefore never be truly utopian or truly democratic. It can, however, act as the stage in which egalitarian actions take place. Where human beings can become affected in ways that enhance the feeling of collectivity and belonging and where human life and action ultimately is rendered meaningful.

## 4.2  Architecture and Utopianism: Space and Projectivity

"It is perhaps no surprise that utopian visions for new societies so often involve a new physical layout – as if a new life would require a new setting to be lived in." (Bell and Zacka 2020a, p. 2) Throughout history, architecture and utopia have undoubtedly shared an intimate connection. When Thomas More (2009 [1516]) famously coined the term *Utopia* in 1516, he had simply given a name to something that had long been existing in mankind. In Western thought, the first modern utopia is believed to date as far back as Plato. Even back then, the built environment was understood to play a significant role for pursuing the achievement of a better society. Plato "accorded architecture and urban design a place on a par with other basic social institutions. For just as we think that the structure of our laws can channel behavior, express collective values, and foster a public ethos – so too, Plato suggests, does the built environment." (Bell and Zacka 2020a, p. 2; see also Bell and Zacka 2020b)

The reason for this is, of course, the deep link between the configuration of space and social life. It is also what makes space so utterly political. As an arena of contestation, it is not merely the backdrop to social and political life but plays "an active role in the constitution and reproduction of social identities" (Valentine 2014, p. 7) which are constituted in and through space. However, this understanding would not arrive until the 1970s, until which the approach to space was of positivist nature. Until then, the understanding of space as absolute would dominate spatial imaginaries for up until most of the 20th century, if not even still to this day. As "a pre-existing terrain which exists outside of, or frames everyday life" (ibid., p. 4) space assumed fixed characteristics. As such, it

was seen as an empty container of objects and events, "an entity in itself, independent of whatever objects and events occupy it" (Davoudi 2018, p. 17).

This understanding of space is rooted in the Cartesian duality of mind and matter, separating ideas about *why* the world exists from *how* it works. Believing that there existed a single truth to be discovered with the help of scientific endeavours, empiricism was privileged over idealism and fell into the domain of science (starting with scrutinising the physical world and expanding to the social world in the 18th century). The conceptualisation of space thus fell into the realm of geometry and physics, which was heavily influenced by Euclid's definition of space through the dimensions of height, depth, size, and proximity. Its later incorporation into Newtonian physics, which portrayed space as an infinite container, is the main reason for the long uninterrupted currency of space as absolute and its persistence as modernism's dominant spatial imaginary. In fact, the very concepts of planning and architecture are so deeply linked to the Euclidean mode – and so too, to the modernist understanding of utopia – "that it is tempting to argue that if [the] traditional model has to go, then the very idea of planning must be abandoned" (Friedmann cited in Davoudi 2018, p. 18, own insertion). Modernist understandings of space have so profoundly shaped the concept of utopia, that it still difficult to imagine utopia otherwise today.

The importance space played in the configuration of societies is furthermore mirrored in the etymology of the term itself. More (2009 [1516]) created *Utopia*, the title of his fictional text, by borrowing from the Greek words *eu* and *topos*, meaning *fortunate* or *good place*. The satiric tone of the text and an English reading of the word, however, allow for a second reading. The etymological and phonetic pun simultaneously gives reference to the Greek word *ou*, which indicates *no place*. The ambiguity of the term has left a lot of room for theoretical speculation ever since. Is utopia the good place that cannot exist? Or is the no(n)-place just an indeterminable place, rather than an impossible place? Does it refer to nowhere *thus far*? Is no place the good place or is the good place, in fact,

no place at all? Whatever the exact meaning, the aspect of space and place remains, nevertheless.

In Thomas More's *Utopia* its inhabitants live on a faraway island of the same name. This means that space, not time, was initially the dimension that separated the utopian society from existing society. The perfect society lived *somewhere else*. A closer look at the circumstances of More's time reveal the roots for this conviction: voyages of the 15th and 16th century sparked interest in undiscovered, faraway places and fuelled the belief that somewhere within the present, may it be on earth or a different planet, a better place could exist. This way of thinking about space remained a pivotal aspect in the creation of utopias. Societies were not only envisioned in the spaces they lived in, but space was seen as the dimension that *set different societies apart*. This is why "the utopic is always conceived as a space, usually an enclosed and commonly isolated space – the walled city, the isolated island, a political and agrarian self-contained organization [...]. The utopic is definitionally conceived in the topological mode, as a place, a space, a locus with definite contours and features." (Grosz 2002, p. 268)

However, whereas Thomas More's *Utopia* was never intended for implementation, simply illustrating a fictional story that functioned as critique and satire of the prevailing system, it was the discovery of the (malleable) future that turned utopias into plans for realisation. Whereas in the past, the future belonged to god(s) and thus rested in the realm of destiny, fate and fortune, from the 17th and 18th century on the future was seen as something to be colonised and controlled through rational human behaviour in the present. The better society thus no longer lived somewhere else, but *at another time* – no longer *not here* but *not yet*. Since within the positivist belief system, the future, and with it the idea of 'true progress', was believed to be predicted and manipulated through scientific endeavours and mathematical analysis (Adam and Groves 2007), space was now implicitly understood to control and freeze time.

Since space was seen as an objective structure instead of a social experience, and because it was assumed that the human condition is based on laws as infallible as those of physics, space was furthermore believed to control the social, also known as spatial determinism. As

a result, spatial planning has a long history of giving spatial solutions to social problems, believing space would result in changes in social behaviour. "It was hoped that the clarity and uniformity of the external setting would secure a similar clarity and uniformity of human behaviour, leaving no room for hesitation, uncertainty or ambivalence" (Bauman cited in Gardiner 2012, p. 7). This approach has not entirely disappeared today.

What followed during the rapid and widespread urbanisation from the 19th century onwards in the West was an overconfidence in spatial projects to solve and control the tensions that city life bared. "In 1923, Le Corbusier famously posed the choice between 'architecture and revolution', claiming revolution could be avoided through the reshaping of the urban built environment in ways that could come to terms with the demands of industry and the modern age" (Brown 2009, p. 127). Thus, "utopianism of solid modernity [...] is concerned about remaking the world along the lines of abstract plans of symmetry, formal order and perfection." (With reference to Bauman, Gardiner 2012, p. 7) Furthermore, modernist endeavours of (re)making the city were haunted by the concept of *tabula rasa* – only once the old has ceased to exist could the new come into being. This is indebted to the fact that modernist projects (of political, social as well as of the spatial kind) where largely induced by eschatological[9] characteristics. (Destroying the old to make space for the new is furthermore a very colonialist attitude). Cities were hence conceptualised as diseased organisms, which "presupposes that they can only be cured by radical surgery as something necessary for protecting citizens." (Coleman 2015, p. 27) Instead of seeing the modern city as a result of the underlying systems, it was portrayed as a 'sickness' of society and planners as the 'doctors of space' (with reference to Lefebvre, ibid., p. 26). "[T]he logic of a pseudo-scientific rationalism has overwhelmed the traditional city." (Coleman 2005, p. 2)

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9    A definition of *eschatology* can be found in the glossary at the end of this book. For a closer examination of eschatological influences in modernist utopianism see next subchapter *4.3 Utopianism and Crisis: Time and Emancipation*.

In this sort of pseudo-scientific rationalism, the underlying assumption of space as a tool for control thus had vast effects not only for spatial projects, but for projects of any (social or political) kind. This is indebted to the interdependence of space and politics and hence their respective significance for either conceptualisation: not only can the spatial be thought of in a political way, but the political can be thought of, and indeed *has* historically been thought of, in a spatial way (Dikeç 2012). Mustafa Dikeç has emphasised that "systems of domination impose orders of space (and time), and that space often appears as a means of control and domination – the tool of closure *par excellence*." (Dikeç 2012, p. 671, original emphasis) He exemplifies this by looking into Plato's politics, which was a very authoritarian understanding of democracy (which is why Foucault referred to it as a "utopia of the perfect governed city" [ibid.]). In Plato's *Republic*, "[e]verything, including the number of the community's inhabitants, had to be *mastered* by a simultaneity in which *being and knowledge entered into strict correspondence*" (citing Laclau, ibid., emphasis by Dikeç). Plato's scheme thus tried to eliminate uncertainty through spatial fixation in which no change could occur. This way of thinking about space has indeed been one of the main characteristics of utopias from ancient Greece until modernity. It does however *not* represent an inherent characteristic of space (nor necessarily of utopias since there have been consistent attempts at reinventing the concept over time; it therefore only represents an inherent characteristic of *traditional* utopias). Thus, what it *does* show is that traditional blueprint and as such modernist utopias "are not marked by multiplicities of time and space for they are representations of an ideal and ultimate time and space, achieved once and for all." (ibid.)

To put it in a nutshell, if "not just [...] the spatial is political [...], but rather [...] thinking the spatial in a particular way can shake up the manner in which certain political questions are formulated" (Massey 2005, p. 9), then this has become especially true for utopias. Modernist readings of space have played a pivotal role for the "common view of utopia as absolute" (Coleman 2005, p. 5), authoritarian, and totalitarian and by extension so too orthodox modernist architecture. Furthermore,

the general consensus is that modernist architecture failed[10] precisely as a consequence of its utopian character. However, attempts at redefining utopia into more processual and open-ended accounts have been made since, stressing the idea that traditional utopias failed due to their inducement of authoritarian idea(l)s rather than utopianism *per se*. The traditional concept of utopia was thus flawed because of the *specific form* utopianism took at that specific moment in time (and space). Hence, what if, what led to the failure of modernist spatial projects were rather the underlying positivist and modernist assumptions about space (and society) than their utopian aspirations? Architectural theorist Nathaniel Coleman even argues, "not only was modern architecture not as utopian as presumed but its failings can actually be understood as resulting, at least partly, from a poverty of utopian imagination: modern architecture was never utopian enough." (Coleman 2012, p. 317)[11]

However, even if modernist architecture was never truly utopian (in the transformative sense) in the first place, modernist architecture nevertheless tried to change society through spatial projects. This is, after all, what makes the connection between architecture and utopia so profound. Not only is space the setting and active part for the construction of

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10   Also defined by K. G. Bristol as 'the Pruitt-Igoe myth'. In architecture theory, the demolition of the housing project Pruitt-Igoe only 20 years after its construction came to be equated with the downfall of modernist architecture, as if the architectural design alone was responsible for its demise, rather than the political-economic and social context within which it was created. Placing the fault on the architectural design alone furthermore legitimised the turn towards a new (post-modernist) style (with reference to K. G. Bristol, Coleman 2014b). This phenomenon furthermore is an argument against architecture being able to 'solve' social problems through design.

11   Here *utopian* is understood not in the modernist sense, but as a conceptual category engaging critical and creative modes of thinking as elaborated in *2.1 Transformative Utopianisms: Utopia as Method*. Coleman states that "one must be left to wonder on what basis [modernist projects] could be identified with Utopia" (Coleman 2012, p. 318, own insertion), since none of the 'Techno-Utopian futurist visionary architects' such as Le Corbusier, Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright or Walter Gropius "questioned the nature of society, institutional models, or the human condition" (citing Borsi, ibid.).

the social and vice versa, but both architecture and utopia imagine ways of organising society beyond the present. Both account for a certain degree of *projectivity*.[12, 13] Moreover, architecture, more than any other discipline, *transforms imagination into materiality*. However, clearly not every architectural project envisions entirely alternative ways of organising society. Some envision society close to its existing form, whereas others might be of greater projective and visionary character. What then, however, makes architecture truly utopian?[14] Is it a certain level of projective-*ness*? And if not all architecture is inherently utopian, is, on the other hand, every utopia architectural?

For David Harvey, all blueprint utopias (even of social and political kind) are in any case *spatial* "since the temporality of the social process, the dialectics of social change – real history – are excluded, while social stability is assured by a fixed spatial form." (Harvey 2000, p. 160) It is the "turning of space into time" (Massey 2005, p. 7) that is at the core of what is often described as the utopian paradox: "Utopias of spatial form are typically meant to stabilize and control the processes that must be mobilized to build them. In the very act of realization, therefore, the historical process takes control of the spatial form that is supposed to control it" (Harvey 2000, p. 173). Utopias that describe a final state can thus only

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12    Projectivity here does not refer to the 'projective project' which Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting have defined in opposition to the 'critical project' in their seminal article *Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism* (Somol and Whiting 2002), but simply to the inherent character of the architectural practice of turning immaterial ideas into material projects. Furthermore, "it somehow went unnoticed, that the notion of *projective architecture* […] was, in fact, a pleonasm" (with reference to Somol and Whiting, Jeinić 2019b, p. 128, original emphasis). As Ana Jeinić states, Somol and Whiting's definition implies the existence of a 'non-projective' practice, suggesting that a practice could be *either* projective *or* critical.

13    As has been mentioned in *2.1 Transformative Utopianisms: Utopia as Method*, the notion of projectivity is well-reflected in the German word *Entwurf*, which means not simply *to design*, *plan*, or *create* – but *to design the **not-yet***.

14    A preliminary answer to this question was given in *2.1 Transformative Utopianisms: Utopia as Method* and will be further explored in *6.3 Embodied Utopianisms of Care*.

exist in environments that never change, or at the end of time, when time stops. They represent a frozen snapshot in time which indeed is essentially *outopia* – nowhere (that is, except in the imagination). Since they are only concerned with the final state and do not take into consideration how to get there, their implementation is necessarily authoritarian. Furthermore, by the time they would be implemented, society would have already changed. This is the case for all traditional/ blueprint/ modernist utopias. They produce architectures of direct control and political inflexibility. However, Harvey's definition 'utopias of spatial form' is misleading nevertheless, since it is not the spatial that freezes and controls time – but the representation. The rigid dimension of space is only one of many dimensions it can assume and occurs when it is associated with a fixation of meaning (Lefebvre 1997 [1974]; Massey 2005).

Thus, if no utopia of *fixed* spatial form can account for the processes of becoming, and if therefore "all realized utopias are degenerate – to achieve utopia is to fail the possibilities of utopia" (Ashcroft as cited in Gardiner 2012, p. 8), where does this leave utopian architecture then? This dilemma has led many to argue that no spatial form can ever entail utopia – the good place being indeed no place at all. "The utopic is beyond a conception of space or place because the utopic, ironically, cannot be regarded as topological at all. It does not conform to a logic of spatiality. It is thus conceivable, and perhaps even arguable, that the utopic is beyond the architectural." (Grosz 2002, p. 267) As long as architecture remains in the domain of manipulating made-spaces and as long as it is only conceptualised in fixed spatial terms, "[a]rchitecture remains out of touch with the fundamental movement of the utopic" (ibid., p. 268).

Therefore, instead of seeing architecture *as* utopia, "thinking of architecture as having a *utopian potential*, or a *utopian dimension*, promises a more productive way to consider utopia and to put it to work as a method for the (social) enrichment of architecture" (Coleman 2005, p. 26, original emphasis). Instead of presenting it as a problem-solving endeavour to society's 'ills', it must find a way to engage in conversation and consider the social and political processes it is entangled in. For architecture to open itself up to the temporal movements of the utopic, it must be seen as a negotiation of the question of how to live and inhabit space

with others. "The task for architecture, as for philosophy, is not to settle on [modernist] utopias, models, concrete ideals, but instead to embark on the process of endless questioning." (Grosz 2002, p. 277, own insertion) For this reason, the precision and determinacy of planning buildings, which leaves no room for the unexpected, "must not be confused with the kinds of planning that are required for political organization and reorganization" (ibid., p. 276).

Furthermore, since contemporary architecture is more often than not preoccupied with problem-solving, rather than "spatial question-raising" (ibid.), it mostly only offers solutions for the present as it exists, rather than imagining what could be. "Architecture […] is nearly always preoccupied with some *ought*; yet much contemporary architectural theory and practice is obsessed with expression of how the world *is*." (Coleman 2005, p. 9, original emphasis) Today, a "gradual decline of the utopian character of architectural design and the reorientation of the discipline toward 'concrete' and 'realistic' tasks" (with reference to Kaminer, Jeinić 2013, p. 68) can be observed. Furthermore, because of this shift (partly indebted to the aftermath of the deterministic readings of space), the outlook on whether architecture can or should do anything is nowadays being dismissed in favour of superficial aspects such as form (which presents itself as fixed and final).[15] "This oblivion appears all the more paradoxical given that architectural design has never been invested with so many expectations regarding its political, social, and economic effects. In the eyes of various urban constituencies, from mayors to real-estate developers, architecture is supposed to contribute to a better urban life, to make cities both more attractive and sustainable." (Picon 2020, p. 279)

Thus, the way space has been conceptualised, implicitly or explicitly, has had substantial consequences for projects of *any* kind (especially since the social, political, and spatial always imply each other). Consequently, this has had very direct effects on architecture since architecture is a very *explicit* expression of the spatial, social, and political project at once. The architectural project furthermore currently enjoys a very

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15     More on this in the following chapters.

prominent status in society and is bound to great expectations, which indicates that it is currently of great significance for the pursuit of human flourishing. What forms does utopianism then take in contemporary architectural projects and what are the underlying assumptions of space today?

## 4.3  Utopianism and Crisis: Time and Emancipation

"[C]risis is not merely a description of events and moments in history that are deeply disruptive, but a view of history itself" (Cuttica et al. 2021, p. 2). As a concept inextricably linked with the philosophy of history, crisis is conceptually interdependent with ideas about progress, renewal and contingency – and as such, with ideas about *time* and *temporality* (Cuttica et al. 2021; Koselleck 2006 [1972–97]; Milstein 2015; Rao et al. 2014). Set in motion by the tension between the 'space of experience' and the 'horizon of expectation' of and in modernity, crisis was introduced as the key concept for interpreting the past, present, and future (Koselleck 2005) and developed into a fundamental category to make sense of daily experiences (Cuttica et al. 2021). By disrupting and throwing into question the assumed premises upon which social life is organised, crisis evokes moral demands for a difference between what *has* occurred and what is *yet to come*. As a conceptual tool it therefore bares potential for renewal and consequently has repeatedly been linked to utopianism in political thought. In fact, history itself is told as a story of crisis and renewal.

This is especially the case in the work of Reinhart Koselleck, one of the most known historians concerned with the philosophy of history, to whom the Enlightenment project is first and foremost a story of crisis and utopianism (Koselleck 2006 [1972–97]). For him, however, utopian philosophical thought of modernity[16] was too naïve, over-simplified, and too disconnected from history as it really was. Others have characterised modernity, "by what has been called *Machbarkeitswahn*,

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16    A 'near-synonym' of the Enlightenment (Cuttica et al. 2021, p. 15).

a 'fury of doability': a belief – a conviction even – that society can be comprehensively renovated, not in the least thanks to the progress of science, technology and governmentality." (Cuttica et al. 2021, p. 2, original emphasis) Indeed, modernity up to the first half of the 20th century was haunted by an (over-)confidence in pursuing utopia – defined as a project set in the future, linked to revolution and progress, and haunted by ideals of complete emancipation. Modernist utopianism and crisis therefore were characteristic of containing eschatological components: "crisis is interpreted as involving a decision which, while unique, is above all final. Thereafter, everything will be different." (Koselleck 2006 [1972–97], p. 371)

This can be explained by a brief examination of the original meanings of *κρίσις (krisis)*. As has been mentioned, *crisis* has its etymological roots in *κρίνω (krinō)*, meaning *to judge* and had already assumed political and juridical meaning in ancient Greece due to its use in trial and in court. It had gained an added theological dimension with the Greek translation of the Old and New Testament. In the wake of apocalyptic expectations, the Greek meaning of juridical judgement got linked to God and therefore assumed the promise of salvation. "[T]he *κρίσις (krisis) at* the end of the world will for the first time reveal true justice. Christians lived in the expectation of the Last Judgment *(κρίσις/ krisis = judicium)*, whose hour, time, and place remained unknown but whose inevitability is certain." (Koselleck 2006 [1972–97], p. 359, original emphasis) Beyond its juridical and theological meaning, however, *crisis* furthermore existed as a medical term, where it referred to both the *observable condition* of an illness as well as the *judgment* of its course (ibid.).

All three original meanings got incorporated into the modern development of the term *crisis* at the end of the 18th century, while the theological aspect assumed a secular meaning – depicting the revolution as salvatory, inevitable, and all-encompassing.[17] "At all times the concept

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17    According to Zoltán Boldizsár Simon (2019) there have been claims that the philosophy of history is nothing other than secularised eschatology. However, what made the modernist conceptualisation of history so unique, was the invention of a *course* of human affairs, placing the possibility of change into the mundane

is applied to life-deciding alternatives meant to answer questions about what is just or unjust, what contributes to salvation or damnation, what furthers health or brings death." (Koselleck 2006 [1972–97], p. 361) This diversity in meaning allowed for its manifold applicability and expansion into all areas of social and political life as well as its development into the concept of history. As such, crisis continued to point towards mutually exclusive alternatives such as fear or hope, dystopia or utopia, social order or collapse (ibid.). This is further exemplified in the phrase 'socialisme ou barbarie' (Hastings-King 2014).

There is another interesting connection between utopianism and crisis, in that utopia(nism) presupposes crisis: the absence of crisis would mean the presence of utopia. After all, among the huge diversity in utopias, whether in *function*, *form*, or *content* the one common denominator, even among utopia's counterpart dystopia, is that they are always induced by and rooted in the dissatisfactions of the present (representing the respective *context*). Furthermore, it is precisely *because* utopia works through the concept of crisis, that it can assume similar qualities of throwing assumptions about the world into disarray. It does so either because it accentuates a certain crisis (through dissolvement or *estrangement*, or through exaggeration in case of dystopias) and as such can act as form of critique. Etymologically, *crisis* and *critique* share the same roots of *krinō* (*to judge*) and therefore indicate a similar form of mental assessment. Critique in this sense emerged simultaneously with the creation of both the modernist concept of crisis and modern bourgeois society as a self-reflective apparatus.

As it was the *belief* in progress and society's self-awareness "as a historical community *capable of achieving* continual progress" (Milstein 2015, p. 145, own emphasis) that placed utopia in the future and thus linked crisis to renewal, it is the *perception* of time which plays a crucial role for the way society positions itself in history. How the past, present, and future are interpreted and brought into relation has inescapable effects on social life. As profoundly historical concepts, utopianism and crisis

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world. As has been mentioned, *eschata* only stands for '*the last things*' and does not portray the road leading to it.

therefore are unequivocally permeated by society's ideas on time. Again: utopia took on the role of a catalyst for social change only once the future *appeared* to be increasingly malleable and open to human control.

While all living beings experience time and temporal movements in some way or other, human interpretation of time can take many different forms and is culturally and historically constructed. "The relationship to time is at the very root of what makes us human." (Adam 2006, p. 119) Therefore, "[t]ime is always social time because only humans regulate and organise their lives by time. Only they conceptualise time. Only they use, control, allocate, and sell their time. Only they lead an 'in time' existence and create their own histories and futures." (Adam 1994, p. 154) Aside from deciding how the past relates to the future, the interpretation of time and temporal relations defines society's perception on death and change, transience and transcendence, ephemerality and contingency.

As for the aspect of contingency, crisis has since its modern development served as an analytical tool for eliminating chance and controlling the unknowable. "[C]risis, ultimately a signifier for contingency" (Rasch cited in Roitman 2014, p. 94), is to this day used to comprehend and interpret the circumstances of the past to simultaneously diminish further uncertainty in the future. As "the main tool of historicisation in the Western world and beyond" (Jordheim and Wigen cited in Cuttica et al. 2021, p. 3), crisis is used as a tool to recalibrate the past into a prognosis for the future. Notwithstanding contingency being an inevitable part of the social as well as the physical world, "our protocols for constructing knowledge are based on a decision about what to hold constant, on how to decide what is certain, and what has already occurred." (Rao 2014, p. 15) Nonetheless, rendering contingency negative has intensified even further in the last two decades by connecting it to the concept of risk. Risk has transformed contingency and chance into economically quantifiable concepts and hence into concepts for discounting the future. Defined as "a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself" (Beck as cited in Levitas 2013a, p. 123) by Ulrich Beck in his influential work *Risk Society*, the concept "is a mode of thinking about potential negative events in the future which calculates their probability and the severity (usually as the fi-

nancial cost) of their effect" (ibid.). However, the problem with bringing the future into a calculative relation to the present, is that it is used for the *benefit of the present*, disregarding future generations affected by it in the process. "Since all profit is established on the basis of its relevance to the present, future events decrease in value proportional to the temporal distances involved." (Adam and Groves 2007, p. 125) This not only renders problems set in the future harmless but downplays the necessity for action needed now to address future events.

Consequently, discourses of risk have tied contingency to economic and environmental uncertainty, insecurity, and anxiety and therefore fuelled apocalyptic and fatalist thinking. They also have highly limited utopian thought: "A transformed future, especially one which is, as it must be, substantially unknown, and which stands in a very uncertain relation to the present, is unthinkable within the discourse of risk, which quite clearly operates as a legitimation of the existing system." (Levitas 2013a, p. 123)

What is brought to the fore in all these aspects, is how the framing of time can serve as a form of co-optation. As time, beyond its natural form, exists as a social construct, its framing is never neutral but, like space, induced by power relations and therefore essentially a contested concept. This means that ideas about time (e.g. on the future, on time scales of societal change, on daily rhythms etc.) "reflect deeper ideals and visions of how social life and political order ought to function." (Marquardt and Delina 2021, p. 4)

This is especially the case in energy and climate politics, where "[t]ime has become a key reference point for measuring the success, failure, and progress of climate action." (ibid., p. 2) It heavily relies on energy and climate studies which are grounded in temporal scenarios, predictions of the future, and competing long-term trajectories. Despite predominantly apolitical framing, these temporal frames are not bound by natural limits alone but induced by power relations. They are so because they involve socio-political transformation, choices in technical inventions and the contested nature of science as knowledge-making. They thus reveal how intertwined the (re)making of time is with knowledge-production and knowledge-claims. "Yet, there is only little

reflection about how time is constructed in these targets, by whom, and for what purpose." (ibid., p. 1)

For example, globalised and generalised time frames in climate science "risk to distract from the drivers behind climate change" (ibid., p. 3) as well as from "the dislocation of atmospheric carbon from the activities that produce it" (ibid.). In doing so, they do not differentiate between distinct uses of carbon or the various localised socio-political contexts. Therefore, scholars have highlighted the importance of localising climate change within distinctive spatialities and temporalities as well as knowledge-making practices, such as lay knowledges as legitimate forms of knowledge in climate change debates (Brace and Geoghegan 2010).

Beyond the contested nature of the future or time scales, also time in the present is a concept open for co-optation. With the belief in progress ingrained in the concept of history, for example, capitalist modernity has produced a time order of acceleration and forward movement. This deterministic notion of time has produced "hierarchical power relations in which the 'powerful are fast, the powerless are slow'" (with reference to Wajcman and Dodd, Marquardt and Delina 2021, p. 3). It has its roots in the commodification of time and is inescapably tied to clock-time, the invention of which "provided the ultimate tool for social control." (Adam 2006, p. 124) Imposed and globally exported by the West, the valorisation of speed has expanded into all social interactions and has hence become naturalised. However, "[w]hile clock-time dominates the world of work and the global economy" (ibid.), there is a large amount of society whose labour and time "does not register on the radar of commodified time" (ibid.). Children, the elderly, women, and the unemployed are thereby predominantly rendered invisible and their work 'unproductive'.

These highly contested time framings and time orders however have further implications on contemporary society. Depicting the future as *exploited*[18] has *extended* the past into the future, which is thereby nowadays rendered as *already decided for*. Whereas the future in modernity was conceptualised as open and up for the taking, today it is haunted by the

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18    "[T]he industrial extension into the future is characterized by parasitical *borrowing* from the future" (Adam 2006, p. 155, own emphasis).

past. However, while in modernity the future was rendered open, its inducement of eschatological components led to claims for emancipation being *infinitely postponed* (Knierbein and Viderman 2018b). As Knierbein an Viderman indicate, the time frame of contemporary utopianism has therefore shifted from the future to the present, insisting on emancipation *now*. This is reflected in movements such as the Spanish anti-austerity movement of 2011, which called for '¡democracia real ya!' *(real democracy now!)*. Isabelle Lorey describes these sorts of movements as a new understanding of democracy, 'presentist democracy', where presentist "refers to a present becoming, to an extended, intensive present." (Lorey 2014, p. 59) It describes a form of politics that breaks "with the linear and continuing narratives of time [...] in order to practice an untimely and unpostponed non-Eurocentric becoming of democracy in the now-time." (Lorey 2016, p. 149) However, while the time of the struggle has been moved to the present, the future has been completely emptied out of meaning. Lorey for example states that the "future becomes insignificant, in a certain sense, in presentist-democratic struggles" (Lorey 2014, p. 60) or that "present becoming of presentist democracy does not project into the future" (ibid.).

However, can emancipatory movements actually achieve change without any ideas on the future? What would it mean for society to exist in such an extended present? With reference to the democratic politics of the May '68 protests, Lorey exemplifies the importance of "practices of organisation that 'function as the crystallisation of the moment and whose strength lies in their power of initiative'" (citing Rancière, Lorey 2014, p. 61). There was however a huge difference between today's movements and those of May '68 regarding the outlook on the future. While 50 years ago the future was still rendered promising, today it is often rendered as a threat. From politics to pop culture, today, the future is deeply embedded in apocalyptic rhetoric and dystopian narratives. While linking crisis to the end of the world is anything but new (as has been shown above), what is different today, is the perspective on what will happen *thereafter*. While in the past, the apocalypse served as the entrance into a better world, today, it is no longer believed that the post-

apocalyptic world will be better – if there should be anything left at all. Furthermore, it will be humanity itself responsible for its own demise.[19]

For these reasons, indeed many theories postulate a changed experience and perception of time as an elongated and extended present. Examples of such theories of changed temporalisations are the theory of a 'broad present' (Gumbrecht 2014) or a presentist 'regime of history' (Hartog 2017). "Today we increasingly feel that our present has broadened, as it is now surrounded by a future we can no longer see, access, or choose and a past that we are not able to leave behind." (Gumbrecht 2014, p. 20) Furthermore, according to Gumbrecht, the present today invokes ambivalence because it no longer serves as the moment of transition between *past experiences* and the *open horizon of possibilities* (as theorised by Koselleck). This however used to be the epistemological habitat of the Cartesian subject and as such "the foundation and precondition of action." (ibid., p. 54) Today, in 'the chronotope of the broad present' this ability is allegedly lost. "In this present it is impossible to forget anything, yet at the same time [...] we no longer know in what direction we should progress." (ibid., p. 32) The past has thus ceased to offer any orientation for the future, while the future seems already anticipated and thereby made present. The crucial reason for this lies in the changed nature of the crisis: while in modernity, crisis was used to describe a difference between past and present, a mode of instable transition between two stable periods, crisis today is understood to be multifaceted, omnipresent, and systemic.[20]

As for the theories postulating a changed experience of time, these are indebted to post-modernist theories of the 1970s and 80s, which have argued against the conceptualisation of history as processual. They have spoken out "disbelief about the future as the promise of human and social betterment" (Simon 2019, p. 75), on "the impossibility of

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19   As of February 2022, such prospects have suddenly resurfaced in light of nuclear threats following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine by which "the threat of total destruction has yet again become tangible." (Viderman et al. 2023, p. 1)

20   For multiple crisis see *3.3 Transformation, Multiple Crises, and Truth Regimes.*

predicting the future of human affairs based on the past" (with reference to Popper, ibid., p. 76), on "the illegitimacy of knowledge-claims about the future" (with reference to Danto, ibid.) as well as the past, and an "incredulity towards metanarratives" (citing Vattimo, ibid.). In short, post-modernist theories have argued for the abolishment of the philosophy of history. However, in so doing they have simply created a *new* metanarrative, since "no one can write history without relying on a philosophy of history (understood as the course of human affairs)" (Simon 2019, p. 76). Thus, rather than describing an end to history or the philosophy thereof, what post-modernist theories have expressed is a *changed conceptualisation* of historical time. Simon (ibid.) has emphasised that Western thought in fact has great difficulties in abandoning the idea of change over time – which, essentially, *is* a conceptualisation of history. Therefore, as long as Western thought continues to conceptualise change over time, a philosophy of history will continue to exist. According to Simon, what differs in today's perception of history, is that change is no longer anticipated in form of a processual change over time but rather in form of singular events (e.g. of the ecological or technological sort). Simon argues that such an *evental* temporality would be a philosophy of history, nevertheless.[21]

Doubting that this is entirely true (it does for example not apply to feminist movements and others which essentially perceive themselves as an ongoing process of emancipation), the main point to be made here is that theories which illustrate today's temporality as entirely presentist run the same risk as post-modernist theories: depicting time in an ahistorical and thus apolitical fashion. While presentist emancipatory theories[22] such as Lorey's are not entirely apolitical (in fact, their intentions are predominantly *to politicise*), focusing *solely* on politicising the

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21    However, it could be argued that Simon's evental temporality could equally have a slightly ahistorical effect, if it leads to conceptualising expected events which stand in no relation to the past or present, such as in some apocalyptic depictions.

22    Emancipatory theories stand in contrast to historical theories, whose latter intention is primarily to describe, rather than to invigorate change. Nevertheless, even within historical theories apolitical framings are not meaningless in this

present *without* envisioning a future can risk politicising for the sake of politicisation.

Theories which primarily focus on politicising the present (such as Lorey 2014, 2016) often refer to a 'full' conception of time, which is principally a good starting point. They stand in opposition to discourses which portray a homogenous conception of time, where time is rendered 'empty'. In the latter conception, each moment equals every other and anything that cannot be achieved today, could be postponed to tomorrow (as in the apolitical time of the calendar). This however conceals the contingent possibilities of every moment and risks missing possibilities to act. A conception of 'full' time, however, politicises, because it recognises each moment as a nexus of contingent possibilities for action and initiative which, once missed, might never return (with reference to Walter Benjamin's conception of time, Kenis and Lievens 2017). This means, that "[t]he time of the political is the time of events, which can occur unexpectedly, but which need to be seized upon" (ibid., p. 1770). Another possible way of politicising the present has been theorised by Jaques Rancière, who postulates rendering the 'invisible visible' or creating 'a part for those who have no part' (with reference to Rancière, Kenis and Mathijs 2014; Lorey 2014).

However, in only politicising the present, without any ideas on the future, movements can enforce a we/them distinction in which it becomes too "difficult to constitute a 'we' at all." (Kenis and Mathijs 2014, p. 155) This has been exemplified by Anneleen Kenis and Erik Mathijs (ibid.), who have analysed the Climate Justice Action (CJA), a grassroots movement whose strategy was to politicise precisely in a Rancièrian fashion. As mentioned, for Rancière politicising is not about developing future imaginaries, but creating the political in the present. However, especially in protests concerned with ecological change, not having any "positively embodied content with regard to the future, articulated vision, myth or imaginary ideal waiting to be realized" (ibid., p. 155) might leave large

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regard since they contribute to knowledge-production and therefore influence conceptualisations of time.

parts of society disengaged. In contrast, "the desire and hope for an alternative and the belief in its possibility appear to be crucial preconditions for enthusing a critical mass of people for a political project." (ibid., p. 155) Only politicising the present in a Rancièrian fashion "appears to be necessary, but it is not a sufficient basis upon which a movement can genuinely repoliticize because it risks preventing the movement from gaining a sufficient social basis." (ibid.) Essentially, "[en]visioning the future [is] a crucial element in any attempt to repoliticize the present." (ibid., p. 149, own insertions) Therefore, politicising time has to be about both: recognising the possibilities of the present while equally portraying hopeful futures.

In fact, if one were to continue the implications of a *full* conception of time, this would mean that at any present moment in time a myriad of possible futures could develop from. This would furthermore illustrate the possibility of *multiple* futures, rather than '*a future*' which supports the narrative of *one* singular trajectory. Instead, a "rejection of this narrative includes the recognition of the plurality of social foundations as always varied, contingent and temporarily established" (with reference to Marchart, Knierbein and Viderman 2018b, p. 278).

To conclude, this subchapter has shed light on how thoroughly contested and complex the concepts of time are. Such concepts can include ideas on the future, the present, on time scales, on (societal) change and its velocity, as well as on temporal aspects such as contingency, ephemerality and transcendence. It has been shown that the experience of time is an inextricable part of human life and how far-reaching therefore the effects of its interpretation are on all areas of social life. The reflections in this subchapter have furthermore brought to the fore how culturally and historically unique the interpretation of time is, while exemplifying that multiple and contrasting perceptions of time can simultaneously exist. Essentially, "[a]ll major social changes are ultimately characterized by *a transformation of space and time in the human experience*." (Castells 2010, p. xxxi, original emphasis)

Moreover, it has been revealed how human beings have turned crisis into an essential analytical tool for interpreting the philosophy of history and therefore its conceptual interdependence with time and

utopianism. However, the problem today, "is that this 'crisis' cannot be reduced to a phase of instability between two stable periods: Quite the reverse, it is becoming the mode of existence of modern societies on a world scale." (Lefebvre cited in Gabauer et al. 2022b, p. 11) The conceptualisation of crisis thus has had inevitable implications for the varying interpretations of time and consequently for the development of utopianism. As such, modernist utopias, revolution, progress, or emancipation can all be understood as different expressions of the pursuit of a better life in which ideas about time vary.

In contrast to traditional utopias, however, emancipation is "not a completed constitution of ideal space and time, but an ongoing process." (With reference to Rancière, Dikeç 2012, p. 671). Therefore, *transformative utopianisms* in contemporary movements tend to be associated with processual and partial emancipation, a shift that began with utopian feminist thought of the 1970s. Utopianism in the form of emancipation tends to be closer related to the experiences of everyday life and its time frame moved from an idealistic future to the ever-conflicted present. Furthermore, such movements have made clear, that "[t]he promise of change can no longer be conceptualized within a singular dialectics of co-optation and revolution; rather, it must be sought in a multiplicity of hope-filled political actions that range in scale from the small performative act to the politics of grand revolutions" (Knierbein and Viderman 2018b, p. 278). Hopeful visions and imaginaries set in multiple futures are therefore necessary to affect[23] society in the long run. As mentioned, emancipatory movements which *only* politicise the present and *not* the future risk creating demobilising effects. This has become even more urgent in times when the future is not only rendered empty and exploited but apocalyptic and already decided for. Moreover, exclusively present-oriented as well as fatalist apocalyptic thinking both have the tendency to render time ahistorical.

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23   Referring to affect theory. Other than emotions, affects are generated through specific material conditions and sensed in relational ways. For more on affect see subchapters *4.1 Crisis and Architecture: The Meaning of Architecture in Crisis Society* as well as *6.1 Agency: Architecture's Political Dimension*.

In addition, more openness is needed towards contingency and the unknown. This however often seems too big a task in times of uncertainty, where one is inclined to hold on to the world as one knows it. We thus find ourselves trapped in a situation where change is desperately needed, but from which change evidently cannot emerge out of the present or past experience in any continuous way. Therefore, any claim for constructive change gives the impression of a radical break, which again is rendered too extreme by those in power. "[W]here change seems difficult, utopia is either impossible to imagine, or becomes collapsed into the analysis of the present itself" (Levitas 2013a, p. 199). This way of thinking thus creates a form of *problem-solving utopianism*, a utopianism close to reality as it exists and working within the present system.

We thus find ourselves in a complex world in which the past no longer makes the future comprehensible but which we nevertheless still try to control and foresee. "Yet there are clear signs that the world we inhabit today and one we have inherited may have moved beyond our ability to conceive of the contingent and the unknown as manageable objects." (Rao 2014, p. 16) This means that "[n]either the dominant Western institutions nor the West's conceptual tools are any longer appropriate to the conditions of their making." (Adam 2006, p. 119)

Essentially, for utopianism to be transformative, entirely new ways of thinking about time-space and space-time[24] and about our position therein are necessary. However, as mentioned in the last few subchapters, there are many concepts and myths that influence the experience and interpretation of time and space (such as realism, positivism, truth regimes, capitalism, globalisation, technological, political and environmental events, as well as growth-oriented, dualistic, and deterministic ways of thinking). These therefore equally influence the forms utopianism takes in architecture today. In addition, architecture *contributes* to the experience of time and space, while simultaneously being a *product* of their interpretation. Therefore, the next chapter will explore the forms

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24    Space-time and time-space "are not distinct concepts; the choice of term in general depends on the emphasis of the argument." (Massey 2005, p. 197)

utopianism takes in architecture today and the role architecture plays in the experience and production of time-space orders as a result.