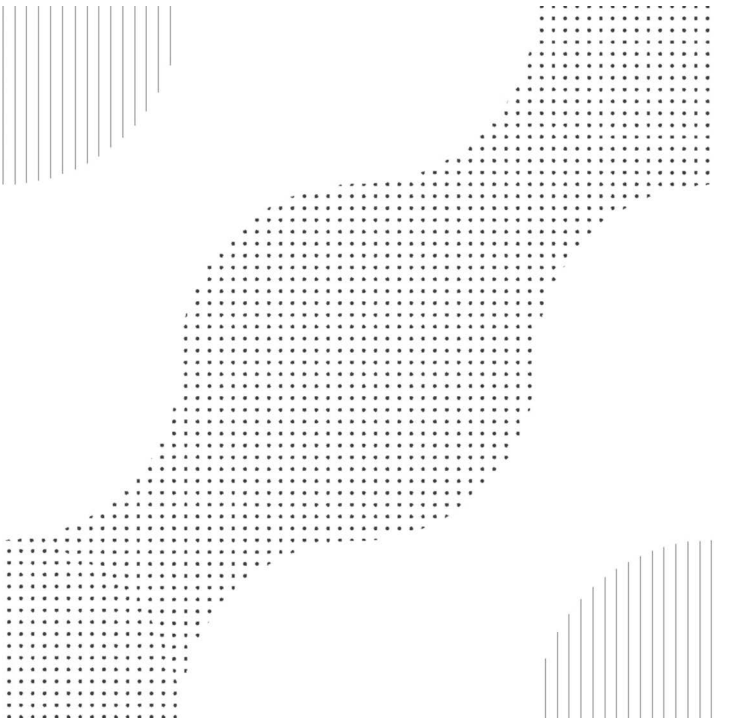
6 Space-Times of Care: Question-Raising Utopianisms



"Everything that is necessary so humans can live as well as possible most definitely involves architecture. Yet […] architecture has not been referred to as a form of care in the traditional discourse on its history and theory." (Krasny 2019, p. 33)

6.1 Agency: Architecture's Political Dimension

Ascribing political efficacy to architecture and defining its role towards society remains a disputed topic to this day. The lack in clarity seems to be "complicated by the question of the structure and constitution of society" (Kaminer 2017, p. 2) and is part of a long ongoing debate within social and political theory, in which agency is contrasted with structure. Is society shaped by a superstructure of ethics, morals and ideals or is it defined by a structural base, that is, the production of space? Or put differently: "Do the accumulated actions of individuals constitute the overarching societal structures, or are the latter so overwhelming as to allow no scope for individual action and freedom?" (Awan et al. 2011, p. 30) This examination is central to the question if architecture can play an active part in shaping society or if it can only sustain the dominant ideology due to its dependence on economic forces.

Even though contemporary conceptions of society are no longer pinned down to such oppositional understandings, architecture still too commonly and conveniently withdraws from the nuanced and complex positions it necessarily is situated in, which is why a dualistic thinking repeatedly remains within the discipline (Gerber 2014). Placing architecture in a dialectic position, however, places its agency in the field of contingency and is thus up for debate. Positions affirming architecture having some kind of influence on society, while accepting that architecture is to a certain extent influenced by external forces still leave questions on the degree of these influences and their exact relation undefined. The difficulty however lies precisely in the ambiguity of this positioning of architecture.

The question 'what exactly *is* architecture?' has often been portrayed as architecture's innermost dilemma. (Although, to what extent might this dilemma – crisis? – be constructed again?). Nevertheless, the issue mirrors the core of a long ongoing debate within architecture: its simul-

taneous situatedness in the physical as well as conceptual world. "It is this peculiar, myriad being-in-the-world-ness of architecture that raises fundamental questions about how architecture enacts, how it performs, and consequently, how it might 'act otherwise' or lead to other possible futures." (Doucet and Cupers 2009, p. 1)

According to architect and architecture theorist Andri Gerber, the ambiguity which comprises architecture is simultaneously its great strength and weakness, since architecture cannot be exactly classified, notwithstanding the compulsory trend for specialisation and classification (Gerber 2014). Nevertheless, architecture is still often divided into two polar extremes, most vividly portrayed by the separation of architectural education. Commonly, technical schools tend to focus on architecture's materiality and its technological aspects, while art schools tend to be more drawn to architecture's social and cultural implications.

> The very school for the preparation of architects was born out of an ambiguous coupling of art and technology, destined inevitably to generate a sterile practice. Its composition – still almost intact today – was derived from the grafting of a few peripheral branches of the Polytechnical School onto the old trunk of the Academy of Fine Arts, a combination of irreconcilable opposites. […] Forced into an inorganic coexistence, both academic art and applied technology retarded the scientific transformation of the architectural discipline and interrupted is contacts with social transformations. (Carlo 2005, p. 6)

This indicates that defining architecture's role in society is significantly dependent on varying worldviews from which one looks at society and architecture: is it art, science, craft, or technology? Is it a discipline, practice, project, or building? Depending on the underlying assumptions, value is either placed on architecture's 'purity' or its social aspects, its function or symbolism, its autonomy or participation, its apoliticality or agency, its hierarchical organisation or de-professionalisation. As such, architecture has had to legitimise its position since modernity.[1]

1 Earliest examples of this discussion might be the articulation made by Gottfried Semper, who at the end of the 19th century argued for architecture as

Significant for current discussions around the agency of architecture is the development of neoliberalism as the predominant form of governmentality and the post-political condition as one of its consequences.[2] Opposing any kind of social responsibility or political agency within architecture has justified the deliberate move towards stylistic and formal aspects. While post-modernist attempts at satisfying the client in order to remain 'neutral' therefore might have emptied architecture of its previous ideological values, architecture did not turn value free. Denying architecture its social role has simply allowed it to be taken over by other controlling forces, such as the market. Especially after the global economic crisis of 2008, austerity politics have resulted in the depoliticisation of elected governments in favour of the market, which operates largely outside the control of citizens and their representatives. The post-political condition thus describes "a condition in which politics are too weak to address the great societal challenges of our times, whether the environmental threats, economic instability, forms of radicalization, inequality or other." (Kaminer 2017, p. 13) It is within this context, that addressing the political (not only) within architecture today gains significance again. The current implications of the post-political situation urgently demand an architecture that enables egalitarian societies.

But how can architecture, in effect, enable political efficacy in the first place? While debates around agency have found their way into architecture, the topic raises "such a wide and seemingly disparate range of questions" (Doucet and Cupers 2009, p. 2) that it leaves critics wondering "how [it is] possible even to propose agency in architecture as a single topic of analysis?" (ibid.) Firstly, the topic of agency raises the question: agency of *what* or *whom*? The agency of the architectural object, of the architect (and thus the architectural practice), theory, or of those who use

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Gesamtkunstwerk, whereas Adolf Loos famously countered with his manifesto *Ornament und Verbrechen (Ornament and Crime)* in 1931. They are indicative of Gerber's comment on the compulsory need for classification (Gerber 2014). See the next subchapter for more on architecture's need for legitimisation.

2 As mentioned in subchapter *3.1 Unfulfilled Promises of Modernity*.

it? This then leads to the question of *how* agency comes into action and focuses on the correlation between thinking, action, and affect.

In terms of the agency of the built environment, emphasis is placed on what architecture *does* instead of what it *represents*. For one, architecture is still mainly represented as a static, atemporal image that has reached its final state with the completion of the building, rather than depicting it as a complex process that evolves over time, involving multiple actors from policy makers to its users. Secondly, "architecture is too often understood as a realm of forms merely representing the social, rather than as a process of production that takes place within a larger social world and also helps shape that world." (Cupers 2020, p. 388) Thirdly, history has focused too much on the notion of intent, that is, the intended meaning of the architect. While form fetishises intentionality through authorship, the focus on intention in political projects can run the risk of merely staying discursively political. In both cases, a shift in perspective from intent to effects, and thus agency, can serve as a helpful tool to evaluate architecture's political efficacy (ibid.).

The Actor-Network-Theory is one attempt at redefining architecture and politics as a complex set of alliances between human and non-human entities, from natural phenomena and beings to artifacts and social constructs, with "the ambition [...] to disentangle oneself from a history that gave a privilege excessive in their eyes to designers and their realizations" (Picon 2020, p. 279). However, since such approaches tend to remain focused on objectively traceable agents in the network of architecture creation, "such a strategy fails to take into account the imaginary and the symbolic in shaping a particular constellation of agents" (Doucet and Cupers 2009, p. 3) and therefore also the notion of sensations and affects (Picon 2020). Furthermore, 'merely' describing spatial interventions in a value-neutral fashion is believed to hinder the emancipatory and transformative potential that architecture could bear (Doucet 2018).[3]

3 Therefore, other attempts on focusing on the performance of architectural objects have moved attention to the Deleuzian concepts of *immanence* and *affect* (and thus away from meaning and intent as it was espoused through theory).

Thoughts on the agency of the architect, on the other hand, focus on the architect's ability to effect social and political change. In the past, especially after Manfredo Tafuri, "the potential of architecture to be engaged with and thus critical of the existing was no longer to be located in the affirmative realm of the architectural project, but shifted […] to the realm of history and theory." (ibid., p. 1) What is clear today, however, is that theory alone does not automatically lead to critical practice, but that they are interdependent. Attempts at re-enacting architecture's social project through the agency of the architect today therefore take shape in the form of critical practices induced by theory, often resembling roles of activists and social workers. "One of the key aspects of change has been the role of theory, which has shifted from a tool of analysis to a mode of practice in its own right." (Rendell 2012, p. 91) Critical theories have developed into forms of knowledge that seek "to transform rather than describe" (ibid.). Influenced by feminist work and others, such practices are "self-critical and desirous of social change" (ibid.) as well as of "speculative manner – which combines critique and invention, and is performative and embodied." (ibid.) These understandings are heavily influenced by Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, who define architecture as a social practice. However, as Jane Rendell states, "to position a building as a 'methodology' rather than as the end result of the method or process that makes it, is a radical proposition." (ibid., p. 92) This reflects the aforementioned central debate about the essence of architecture. "Despite their potential for change, many critics remain sceptical about the ultimate results and repercussions of these initiatives. Those policing the disciplinary boundaries of architecture have been most readily dismissive of what they consider to be social work and not *architecture*." (Cupers 2020, p. 387, original emphasis)

Another aspect of agency shaking the traditional foundations of the architecture practice is its conceptual counterpart of withdrawal.

However, since such attempts have often revolved around starchitecture and consequently, despite their ambitions, returned to the concepts of authorship and intentionality, Isabelle Doucet and Kenny Cupers stress that the notion of meaning should not be done away with altogether (Doucet and Cupers 2009).

"[A]gency means being able to intervene in the world, or to refrain from such intervention, with the effect of influencing a specific process or state of affairs" (Giddens as cited in Awan et al., p. 31). This is especially meaningful and revolutionary in an architectural context, where the main task still is seen in adding something new to the environment. In this sense, "decisive non-action" (Heindl et al. 2019, p. 23) can be just as important a mode of critical action. The architects behind architecture firm Lacaton & Vassal, for example, have repeatedly decided against the tearing down of buildings and opted for renovation and improvement of the existing instead. Architects exercising agency today thus recognise their simultaneous responsibility as architects and active participants in society. Such critical spatial practices are forms of resistance against neoliberal planning 'from within'. However, also Cupers reminds us that "[w]e should be wary of the claim that such approaches are inherently progressive because they offer a critique of capitalism." (Cupers 2020, p. 389)

Another aspect of these practices is that they are necessarily of trans- and multidisciplinary nature and although agency places attention on the individual, such agency can only be attained collectively. "The cases in which the architect appears to have the power to significantly impact society through the design of buildings and cities stress the need for allegiances and alliances that cut across disciplinary and professional barriers, as well as the necessity of the dissemination of ideas, concepts and values which contrast dominant societal forms. Instead of architectural or individual freedom, the architect requires accomplices and collaborators in order to affect society." (Kaminer 2017, p. 181)

Agency in architecture thus sits within a broad context of social and political theory, accounts for a multifaceted range of aspects and stands in close relation to architecture's innermost controversy. Architecture is undoubtedly situated somewhere between art, science, craft, and technology and necessarily accounts for a discipline, practice, project and building at the same time. For Gerber architecture always represents a synthesis and thereby symbolises the contemporary simultaneousness of opposites (Gerber 2014). This means that architecture of the 21st century ought to be measured by more than a reduced set of qualities. While

form alone can thus not suffice to account for 'good architecture', no amount of sustainability ought to legitimise the existence of buildings that do not need to be built in the first place. While this is not to say that socio-politically engaged architecture cannot engage in debates around materiality, it rather means, that architecture today has to simultaneously account for a wide range of aspects and responsibilities. In light of today's circumstances, architecture has become an even more demanding task in which interdisciplinary approaches seem unavoidable in addressing society's complex problems. Overcoming traditional dogmas and myths are necessary steps in such direction. Again, Gerber reminds us that an 'architecture of extremes' is nothing but an evasion of the nature of the discipline, which is located not in but in-between these extremes. According to Gerber, the discipline however seems to fail to recognise this (ibid.).

However, contextualising and situating architecture means that architecture's agency is highly contingent and its political efficacy dependent on the specific circumstances of any project, such as time, place, and context. It is, however, exactly this aspect of contingency that is up for political contestation. What appears as arbitrariness can provide as the space in which counterhegemonic, and perhaps even transformative, voices can be expressed. It furthermore means, "that agency, no matter how multifarious or intricately entangled, is what continues to give architecture its critical potential." (Doucet and Cupers 2009, p. 5)

6.2 Rethinking Architectural Education

"The icon architect: lone, never-sleeping genius, middle-class man, white, cis, able… penetrates beyond the boundaries of the university. Architectural practice, city planning, and cultural production are governed by, and produced for this image, thus structurally reproduced again and again" (Claiming*Spaces 2022a), was one of the opening statements of the conference by *Claiming Spaces*, a collective for feminist perspectives in architecture and spatial planning, which took place on 26th March 2022 in Vienna (Claiming*Spaces 2022b). It could be argued

that architecture, as a heavily institutionalised system, is a direct reflection of society's inherently contested nature: male-centred, power-driven, and western-focused. Its institutionalisation is established on a tradition, an educational system, and responsibilities linked to a legally protected profession. As a well-established discipline, architecture has therefore developed its tools, methods, theoretical principles, and body of knowledge and as such decides on what is (good) architecture and what is not. As any social undertaking, "architecture itself is therefore ideological" (Verschaffel 2012, p. 168).

Knowing the canon of architecture is thus an essential part of architectural education. To make architecture is to know its history and to continue its tradition in a culturally meaningful way. Teaching architecture through its canon alone has however huge implications: focusing on formal aesthetics "inevitably – probably purposefully – abstracts the building from its 'real' historical, social, economical, technical context, transfers it to the timeless, a-historical Gallery of Famous Buildings, and deduces its meaning and value from its place there." (With reference to Tafuri, ibid.) The focus on aesthetic references in architectural education therefore repeatedly reproduces architecture as a Western, male, and iconic discipline. As a result, more than 70% of architecture students who had already received architecture education for a minimum of three years could not name more than five women architects (excluding Zaha Hadid) as a recent study revealed (Claiming*Spaces 2022b).[4] To Petra Petersson, practising architect and dean of the faculty of architecture at the TU Graz, the problem however not only sits in the choice of architectural references but starts much earlier in that women architects often do not even get to work on the iconic projects. To paraphrase, 'why do women design housing and not the big museums?' (ibid.)

To this day, the picture of the architect as the artistic genius reigns beyond the discipline. Architectural education teaches students to be the next Mies van der Rohe or Zaha Hadid, even though this does not reflect the broad reality of the profession. As such the architect is heavily linked to a calling or vocation which makes long working hours and sleepless

4 The study was carried out by Gender Taskforce at TU Graz.

nights for little monetary compensation a natural requisite. If you did not sacrifice at least one night for a project, you did not sufficiently put in the work. This mentality gets ingrained into architectural students early on and then reproduced in architectural labour. Architects are therefore perceived as being "outside of the work/labor discourse because what they do (is) art or design rather than work per se" (citing Deamer, Till 2018, p. 164).

The roots for this conviction were set in stone when Vitruvius, the founding father of architecture, set architecture apart from nature and situated it in culture in his influential *Ten Books on Architecture* written in 30 BC. "He lists geometry, history, philosophy, music, medicine, law and astronomy as the important fields an architect has to study and know. Nature no longer teaches the architect" (Krasny 2019, p. 35). After architecture thus being firmly established as a part of culture since antiquity, in the 15th century the Renaissance period introduces the idea of the independent genius. It is thus on the basis of the nature/culture divide that the *mestiere/arte* (*craft/art*) binary gets created, setting the architect apart from craftsmanship.[5] Following a long history of the architect as the single artistic genius being well-established, systemic architectural education gets introduced during the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century. European 'philosophes' considered architecture, as part of the sciences and technical arts, to be the motor for improving general welfare of free and equal citizens in a democratically organised state. Architecture, well-entrenched on independence and autonomy, thus once again attains an elevated position in society. Quite interestingly, Tahl Kaminer observed that the "constitution of the discipline shifted the centre of architecture from the material object itself, from the building, to the ideal

5 The architect is set apart by Leon Battista Alberti as follows: "For it is not the Carpenter or a Joiner that I thus rank with the greatest Masters […] the manual Operator being no more than an Instrument to the Architect. Him I call an Architect, who, by sure and wonderful Art and Method, is able, both with Thought and Invention, to devise, and with Execution, to complete all those Works, which […] can, with the greatest Beauty, be adapted to the Uses of Mankind: Such must be the Architect" (Alberti cited in ibid., p. 36).

object, and further, to the process of thought and the knowledge of the architect." (Kaminer 2011, p. 3)

While architecture was from the beginning situated in the realm of art, it simultaneously was more than art: architecture is known as the 'mother of arts' because it assembles all forms of art. It is furthermore rendered productive rather than imitative and as such attributed to *design*. In fact, to this day, the majority of mainstream educational programmes rely on the classic design myths which, during modernism, acquired new intensity. Under the rational and functional logic in the context of industrial and market-oriented production they further established architecture as a problem-solving discipline during the 20th century. "Myths taught at design school: 1) Design is good, 2) Design makes people's lives better, 3) Design solves problems." (Auger et al. 2021, p. 19)

Indeed, while the architect to this day is primarily associated with designing, this only reflects a very limited part of the actual job. "The complexity of architectural projects demands a high degree of specialization and division of labour, which leads to hierarchical structures and blurring of distinct authorship, which are typical of contemporary service and the administration sector." (Fischer 2012, p. 56)[6] The state of the architect is in fact uncertain, sitting between engineering, the service industry, and art. An Austrian study of the professional field confirmed a diffuse picture of architects given in their own self-assessments, where they described their roles as being somewhere between technicians, managers, and artists (Schürer and Gollner 2008). The exact identity of the architect thus remains unclear and hybrid, and students acquire a confusing and distorted picture of the architect's responsibilities.

Furthermore, while "[a]rchitecture is well institutionalized as a discipline, […] the field of architecture has a 'weak identity' and is in constant need of *legitimization*." (Verschaffel 2012, p. 165, original emphasis) While being an inherently multidisciplinary field, architecture is in constant search of its 'true essence' and autonomy. The search for the autonomy of architecture is however nothing but a "fallback position of archi-

6 Especially in an international context and in larger offices; less so in small local architecture firms.

tectural practice evading social reality" (Fischer 2012, p. 63). As the conditions of society are changing and an increasing amount of scholarship tries to widen architecture's definition, architecture thus has difficulties to adapt, clinging onto its familiar methods. Gender studies, post-colonial theories, and vernacular movements, for example, have frequently spoken out against the very notion of the canon and have tried to extend the definition of architecture to the social production of space as well as established forms of knowledge-claims and knowledge-production. While problem-oriented and building-driven thinking alone no longer seem adequate to address the complexity of today's challenges, the discipline nevertheless still insists on its orthodox modi operandi. Architecture thus obfuscates its potential weakness as an autonomous discipline and continues to train students by pushing the creation of buildings and iconicity. It thus obsessively focuses on the design process and its instruments such as diagrams and models which have gained 'magical attributes' (Jeinić 2019a). Furthermore, a problem arises when such reductionist methods are presented as absolute and objective truths, as a 'science of space'. Approaches in which "knowledge *of* space (as a product, and not as an aggregate of objects produced) is substituted for knowledge of things *in* space" (Lefebvre 1997 [1974], p. 104, original emphasis), result in a "scientific ideology *par excellence*" (ibid., p. 107, original emphasis) in which the multiplicity and complexity of space is abstracted and rendered as final. As such, the assumption in architecture remains "that space can be shown by means of space itself." (ibid., p. 96)

As yet, the architecture student is thus trained in manipulating space and form, controlling and limiting contingency. Aspects that are unpredictable and contingent and which the architect has limited power over "cause the architects discomfort" (Awan et al. 2018, p. 28). "It is as if architecture were merely a potential space and not an actual place, concrete, made of real materials, and inhabited by people in a permanent and continually changing relationship." (Carlo 2005, p. 13) A discipline which continues to focus on a history that gave privilege excessive to architects and their realisations thus continues to reproduce a definition of architecture limited to representation alone. "Rather than anticipating life, architecture often provides settings that could only function as

planned had the architect also designed the inhabitants." (Coleman 2015, p. 19) Furthermore, representations fix social relations in space and time, creating spaces of control rather than spaces where life can unfold in meaningful and convivial ways (Adam 2006; Lefebvre 1997 [1974]; Massey 2005). Architectural education rarely reminds its students that there can never be a final shape for a city (Madanipour 2010).

These aspects reveal how architecture as a heavily institutionalised system has difficulties to widen its definition, open up to other disciplines, rethink its position and methods, and continuously tries to perpetuate architecture as an autonomous discipline instead. However, new ways of engaging with the discipline's innermost problems would imply reconsidering aspects such as: What should be the tasks and responsibilities of the architect? What is architecture? What should architecture do? These questions refer to the many ways in which architecture is interconnected with utopianism and crisis, of which several have been discussed in this book thus far.

Since utopianism can act as a tool of *estrangement*, offering an *other* (Hage 2011, 2015) way of understanding,[7] its introduction into architectural education could offer promising ways for rethinking architecture's inherent (crisis-ridden) contradictions. As a form of dialectical forward-oriented what-if way of thinking, utopianism can also be referred to as (utopian) speculation. This form of speculation is not related to the financial use of the term, but understands "speculation as a methodology that accommodates our awareness that things could be different [...] Such a methodology embraces the non-intentional contingencies of action, the unknowable, and thus the necessity to weigh and hold in balance a multitude of possibilities." (Kuoni 2014, p. 11)

Therefore, by emphasising *estrangement* and the processual character of the method of utopianism, an *other* way of teaching architecture could be an invitation for going beyond iconography and object-making, shifting attention to processes and practices instead. An *other* pedagogy would furthermore imply demystifying the image of the artistic

7 See 2.1 *Transformative Utopianisms: Utopia as Method*.

genius and preparing students more accurately for the reality of the profession, for example through negotiation tactics, critical inquiries into the financing of projects, creating awareness for the plurality of society, and developing sensibilities towards people, politics, and policies (Schneider 2019). Furthermore, while architectural tools rely on abstraction, students should learn that space has many other dimensions beyond its fixed measurements. In addition, students learn early on to depict illustrations as invitingly as possible, which often leads to renderings not depicting reality accurately. Yarina (2017) has demonstrated that these tactics continue to be used later on in renderings for concrete architectural projects, for example, by hiding fences to initially give the impression of offering open public spaces, which however would not resemble the later carried-out plans. She contends that while the client might have the final word on the design, architects should resist falsely idealising their renderings. She further stresses to be audibly critical of representations which falsely depict an exclusively middle-class society.

Shifting architecture from its object-centred focus would thus mean to shift attention to its *agency*. While this does not mean that there no longer exists a need for experts, it implies a reduced independence and artistic freedom. It asks professionals to communicate on an eye-level, without being offended by a non-hierarchical knowledge exchange. Essentially, "agency is about the architect as an anti-hero" (Schneider 2011, p. 325).

Furthermore, while high costs and time pressure (although this is part of the problem) partially legitimise controlling contingency in the professional practice, in education there should be room for explicit utopianism and the unexpected. Spending all efforts on limiting spontaneity and cautious planning tends to lead to predefined outcomes and foreclosure. Thinking in individual projects which come to an end with the final building should be a similar cause for concern within utopian speculation. Instead, design processes that are open-ended and playful could be a chance for architecture to reconnect with the social, bodily experiences, and the everyday. Essentially, design processes of 'spatial question-raising' (Grosz 2002) would lie at the heart of utopian speculation in architectural education.

An *other* way of thinking and educating[8] would furthermore mean for universities to critically reflect upon themselves and their history. While systemic architectural education was introduced as the motor for improving general welfare of free and equal citizens in a democratically organised state in the 18th century, this only applied to white male bourgeois citizens (with reference to Pfammater, Krasny 2019). Architectural education was thus from its very beginning exclusionary. Even once women were accepted into the academy in the 1970s and entered the profession, a divide remained in which women were assumed to design the hidden-reproductive spaces and men the public-productive ones (with reference to Stratigakos, Krasny 2019). While some women have managed to acquire seats alongside male architects, discrimination upholds within the discipline, in professional practices as well as education (Manka and Riß 2022; Tether 2017). While female architecture students meanwhile amount to more than half in total numbers in Europe (Waite 2021) and the US (NAAB 2021), their amount decreases as education progresses until they remain largely absent in the professional field due to chauvinist, sexist, and patriarchal environments. Studies presented at the aforementioned conference, for example, have shed light on some of the existing gender biases and gender gaps at the Technical University of Vienna (Claiming*Spaces 2022b).[9] One such study presented the existence of a gender-stereotypical choice in technical courses in the master's programme which was identified due to a lack of self-confidence in female students. They did not feel capable or sufficiently prepared for technically affiliated courses, which shows that the bache-

8 Referring to the German speaking debate between *Bildung* (education) and *Ausbildung* (training). In contrast to education, training is linked to its 'usefulness' and direct applicability. The notion of *Bildung* is perceived as a critique of traditional educational systems and focuses, for example, on the strengthening of cognitive capabilities and adaptability in light of changing environments and increasing cognitive demands (Oelkers 2016). *Bildung* versus *Ausbildung* was furthermore a key theme in the earlier European student protests emerging from Vienna.

9 See Manka and Riß 2022 for the follow-up article on the conference.

lor programme was not able to breach this gender gap properly (ibid.).[10] In a similar vein, another study analysed the distribution of tasks within group work in design studios and found out that a gendered allocation of tasks exists. For example, tasks concerning building technology and aesthetics were mostly carried out by male students, while female students took care of layout concerns and project organisation (ibid.). The gender gap furthermore existed within speaking times during final presentations. In addition, students still encounter discriminatory remarks attributed to their gender, ethnicity and/or further visual appearances on a regular basis (ibid.).

A further study reflected on the fact that while architecture psychology teaches the effects space has on creative processes and well-being, these considerations are not met sufficiently in its own university spaces. The study expressed a need for spaces which, beyond diversity and inclusion, allow for retreat as well as that which would enable meaningful exchange (ibid.). As for inclusion, in an interview on the topic of possible ways to make architecture education more accessible, a blind architecture student stated how presupposing long working hours at architecture firms is essentially ableist. Including perspectives from blind and partially sighted people can therefore not only benefit those excluded but be for the benefit of everyone and the enrichment of the field (Boys and Levison 2023).

This alarming contemporary situation at the very premises of the university show that the discipline is desperately in need of critically reflecting upon, if not of reinventing itself. Institutional (self-)critique however should not be limited to universities but extended to mediational institutions such as museums, professional associations and organisations, unions, and advocacy groups. Education and pedagogy, however, might perhaps be a good place to start, with the hope that changes in other institutions and practices would follow.

10 It should be mentioned, however, that there is another side to the coin, in that male students should equally be made receptive to studying commonly female-read topics such as housing and care.

As a discipline that is indebted to a long history of Western thought, the discipline is furthermore heavily permeated by what Gayatri Spivak has termed 'epistemic violence' (Krasny 2019). It refers to dualistic ways of thinking, separating the world into irreconcilable binaries in which one concept gets prioritised over the other (here listed in opposition to the traditional hierarchisation), such as: nature/culture, craft/art, body/mind, idealism/empiricism, processes/objects, emotion/reason, space/time, female/male, private/public, disorder/order, etc. Introducing utopian speculation would not mean to simply reverse this logic and define the opposite concept in terms of lack, but to consider more nuanced and interdependent positions which potentially are in a constant state of flux.

Furthermore, a utopian speculation meandering in a dialectic fashion between closure and non-closure (and everything in-between) would invite the inclusion of temporal and processual conceptualisations of space into architecture. In this sense, a utopian speculation as method could prove fruitful in shifting attention to relational considerations such as use and inhabitation rather than pinning architecture down to independent objects and images alone.

To conclude, this subchapter has shown the extent to which the architectural discipline is heavily permeated by society's crisis-ridden power structures. These not only lead to entrenched ideological hierarchies, but also define the boundaries of architecture. Notwithstanding the wide-ranging changes of social arrangements taking place in the past decades, architecture therefore seems to have difficulties in evolving from its orthodox methods and ways of thinking. As such, it remains first and foremost a problem-solving discipline. One could therefore be left to argue that contemporary orthodox architectural education does not adequately prepare students with the sensibility needed to address the complex and demanding challenges of the 21st century.

Architecture as an inherently projective discipline[11] however carries huge potential for rethinking social ways of life, whether through housing, public space, schools, work, or other. What would be possible if the

11 As elaborated on in *4.2 Architecture and Utopianism: Space and Projectivity*.

discipline's creative energy was used for more than just creating objects? Perhaps, however, it becomes equally important to introduce new voices into the discipline and incentivise a broader conversation. Therefore, "if architecture now requires thinkers from outside of the discipline to be able to think its thoughts, that might actually herald the potential for disciplinary renewal, largely because architects […] have abandoned the possibility of [thinking from within the discipline], and so now require the assistance of non-architects to help them to recollect how to think for themselves." (Coleman 2015, p. 16, own insertion)

What kind of architecture then could be adequate for this era?

6.3 Embodied Utopianisms of Care

"If we spend an ever-increasing proportion of our lives in these non-places […] and if we as individual subjects are becoming more and more commodified by a dominant discourse – we need to imagine alternative ways of how we can *live together* in these contemporary non-places" (Rumpfhuber 2011, p. 356, original emphasis). Since many intellectuals have argued that contemporary progressive thinkers have fallen back into a reactionary defence mechanism, with limited imagination and only capable of analysing and saying what they are against (Nagle 2018; Santos 1995; Wilson and Swyngedouw 2015b; Žižek 2012c), scholars have stressed the urgent necessity to combine thorough analysis of the ways in which cities are marked by exploitation and exclusion with hope-filled, creative insights into alternative ways of living (Brand 2016b; Coleman 2012; Knierbein 2020, unpublished). Imagining urban futures through the lens of conviviality and care therefore might be a good starting point to counter urban realities marked by control, alienation, and a 'pseudo'-scientific rationale (Castoriadis 2005 [1987]; Coleman 2005; Lefebvre 1997 [1974]; Unger 2014). A possible method will therefore be introduced in the following as an *embodied utopianism of care*.

Since cities today are the result of an 'age of carelessness' (Madanipour 2022), rethinking how to live together, now and in the future, is not only political, it is essentially a form of care: caring about each other, car-

ing about the spaces we live in, caring about the future planet and the future generations yet to come. In fact, "[o]ur shared survival depends on increasing our collective caring-capacity across every space—with one another, at home, at work, throughout the city and beyond." (McKinnon et al. 2022, p. 24) Scholars have therefore argued that the concept of care has much to offer in thinking about relationalities in a post-colonial (Raghuram et al. 2009), feminist, and urban world (Gabauer et al. 2022b). Care therefore not only offers a way for rethinking communality but "indeed might be a basis for how our democracy imagines a 'good citizen'" (Tronto 2015, p. 7) or "form the basis of a new common sense." (McKinnon et al. 2022, p. 26)

As an analytical concept, care can offer a fruitful lens to shed light on 'uncaring' space-time regimes at various social, spatial, and temporal scales (Gabauer et al. 2022b). It can, however, equally entail a *normative* quality with the goal to potentially inform and transform material experiences in everyday life. As a philosophical and political concept, it includes moral commitments and ethical considerations, "shap[ing] what we pay attention to, how we think about responsibility, what we do, how responsive we are to the world around us, and what we think of as important in life." (Tronto 2015, p. 8, own insertion)

Since the 1970s feminist scholars have tried to untie care from being predominantly perceived as a feminine trait and practice (see Gabauer et al. 2022b for an overview). Care has, however, since further developed into a political concept for rethinking human relationships, placing the reciprocal neediness between people and other beings at its centre. While human beings are socially dependent on each other, care is nevertheless still being negatively associated with dependency and weakness in the neoliberal age which upholds self-reliance (Gabauer et al. 2022a). Care receiving is however neither restricted to the vulnerable, elderly, disabled, children, or those groups that are identified with state welfare provision, nor is caregiving practised by independent, autonomous subjects (Bowlby 2012).

> In the most general sense, care [is] a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so

> that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web. (Fisher/Tronto as cited in Tronto 2019, p. 29, emphasis removed)

This understanding of care therefore is neither restricted to informal care work at home, nor to formal, institutionalised care work, but refers to a *relational practice* always already being performed by human beings potentially everywhere and anywhere, between strangers, friends, family, and colleagues.

As a relational concept, care has therefore historically not been the primary focus in architecture which is occupied with creating buildings as objects rather than buildings as relationships (Rendell 2012). While some might argue that buildings protect and provide shelter, for feminist intellectuals like Joan Tronto, they however do not provide a form of care. "The point is not that contemporary architects and planners are all uncaring; the point is that they are caring wrongly. They care about *things*, and, often, about the wrong things." (Tronto 2019, p. 27, original emphasis) Tronto refers to scholars such as Batya Weinbaum and Amy Bridges who have stressed that 'things' (such as buildings or money) are in themselves not a form of care but need to be transformed through caring practices. For architecture to be caring would therefore imply "entirely new ways of seeing the relationships among the built environment, nature and humans" (Tronto 2019, p. 26), shifting attention to its situatedness in a life-sustaining web.

The problem, however, is that "in most cities around the world the 'official story' is the story of men in power" (Friedmann 1999, p. 7) and therefore about money and 'things'. In this sort of story, representational architecture tends to be deeply entangled with those in power and their capital. However, even though architecture *is* dependent on large amounts of money, there *do* exist possibilities for alternative forms of architecture production from within the present economic system. Angelika Fitz and Elke Krasny (2019a) have explored numerous contemporary examples of caring architecture which make use of diverse economy practices such as "the introduction of circular economies,

the support for self-managed infrastructures and local production, the reuse of existing buildings or building materials, community engagement, volunteering, participatory workshops, skill building or public environmental pedagogy" (with reference to Gibson-Graham, Fitz and Krasny 2019b, p. 14). The exemplary projects in their publication *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a broken Planet* and exhibition of the same name reveal that caring practices make use of situated knowledges, different ways of knowing, learning, and sharing. They therefore reveal that there is no one-solution-fits-all, but that such practices always act in specific, context-dependent, and distinctly different ways. In analysing these projects, they stress the need for alliances between caring agents (such as local residents, architects, urban planners, public administrators, or developers) and knowledge agents (craftspeople, researchers, social workers, residents, artists and many more). These architectural projects have expressed how architecture can, through caring spatial practices, care for the well-being of residents, communities, and the environment. They reveal "what architecture *can do* in times of 'economic and ecological ruination' and 'what urbanism seeks to plan for, given the reality of crisis'" (partially citing Tsing, ibid., p. 15, own emphasis).

In a way, introducing the concept of care into architecture would tackle many of the things that have been mentioned in this book thus far. For one, in depicting space as relational, care essentially politicises architecture. While space can have many qualities, it is its embrace of the movement of the social, which would make it inherently political. "In order for space to have political import, it has to be associated in some way with change in the established order of things, leading to new distributions, relations, connections and disconnections" (Dikeç 2012, p. 675). However, in architecture, as has been mentioned, shifting buildings from independent entities to the product of relations, "is a radical proposition." (Rendell 2012, p. 92)

Furthermore, as a very broad concept, care can be applied to various social, spatial, and temporal scales, each coming with their own spatiality and temporality. As such, care could work against space-times of control and alienation on various levels. For example, Gabauer

et al. (2022a) have shown how important transitory and threshold spaces are for informal caregiving and care receiving and how these can create a sense of belonging, especially intergenerationally. As an embodied temporality, care furthermore is tied to daily rhythms which are not only bound by biological necessities but intimately bound up with social experiences and under capitalism controlled by clock-time (Bowlby 2012). The attribution of informal care work to those who do not show up on the radar of commodified clock-time, for example, has rendered a lot of care work invisible (Adam 2006). Adjusting daily rhythms to care responsibilities, therefore could create broader cultures of care and lead to entirely new constellations of intersectional relations amongst society. Research has shown "how temporal routines of care can help carers cope with both everyday pressures and crises." (With reference to Wiles, Bowlby 2012, p. 2107) Furthermore, already Lefebvre has stressed that "[r]elational space thus renders time as 'lived time'; it integrates the analysis of different times and rhythms of practices in public space in order to overcome the one-sided functional time conception implicit in capitalist urban development. Appropriation, in this sense, is considered as 'de-alienation'" (Lefebvre cited in Knierbein 2020, unpublished, p. 112). On a macro-level, in contrast, care could be introduced to reverse the uncaring practices which underpin global relationships and rethink exploitative power structures. On this scale care acts spatially with regards to the exploitation of human and natural resources while its temporal aspect refers to the imposed determined trajectories and processes of globalisation and modernisation in the Global South (Raghuram et al. 2009). Other temporal aspects of care are its embeddedness in past experiences and memories as well as in expectations and anticipations of the future (Bowlby 2012). As such, a politics of care towards future generations could substantially influence political decisions being made today.

These aspects give a glimpse into care as a multilayered field of political contestation, shaped by social interactions and expectations and bound to various spatialities and temporalities. As an analytical concept, care can therefore help rethink unequal relationships between carer and cared for in various contexts and scales. As a normative concept, how-

ever, care is equally about creating "alternative visions [and] alternative understandings of how the world could be better" (citing Gilmartin and Berg, Raghuram et al. 2009, p. 11, own insertion). As such, care has a lot to offer for *embodied utopianisms* motivated to change material realities.

As has been mentioned in *2.1 Transformative Utopianisms: Utopia as Method*, such forms of utopianism, located in everyday life, "are not purely imaginary projections because they are grounded in the direct experiences, aspirations and embodied or 'felt' needs of individuals and the communities to which they belong. They express all the ambiguities, contradictions and inherent 'messiness' of human life [...] marked by contingency and open-endedness, albeit always shaped by specific material conditions." (Gardiner 2012, p. 13) *Embodied utopianisms of care* would therefore be grounded in the material reality of everyday life, while equally engaging in the urban (im)possible and inventing new paths and stories for a caring society. In this sense, *embodied utopianisms of care* could be the basis for caring spatial practices, which not only focus on repairing and fixing current 'ills', but on fighting for the (yet) untold stories of the city. "For what, in the end, is an embodied utopia but the act of imagining an alternative to the constrictive and discriminatory spaces of the present, and then enacting that vision in all its materiality?" (Bingaman et al. 2002a, p. 12)

Such *embodied utopianisms of care* therefore portray the everyday as a space of resistance. It is here, that calls for different stories can be made and where the pressure and desire for a different architecture ultimately must come from. According to Raghuram et al. (2009), care and responsibility have the capacity to channel desires, emotions, and affect, making them not a burden but forward-looking. "And these productive emotions can form the basis for generating long-term embodied and pragmatic responsiveness." (ibid., p.11) Care bound up with decidedly hopeful utopian thinking could thus nurture imagination for creative, optimistic visions of conviviality and de-alienation, combined with a desire for their fulfilment. In a similar vein, Hardt and Negri stress the possibility for resistance within *Empire* in the creative forces of intellectual labour (see *Multitude*, Hardt and Negri 2005) and the ability of 'love and desire' to confront crisis (Hardt and Negri 2003, pp. 387–388).

Essentially, care as a relational concept ideally makes use of situated understandings, and utopianism, on the other hand, contains the possibility to engage *normatively, critically, creatively,* and *epistemologically*[12] with the contingent arrangements of society. The method proposed here thus combines utopian thinking (as *method* or *form*) with the concept of care (as *content*) to improve material realities (*function*) through the production of space and imaginative thought. The outlined method thereby also proposes to go beyond stereotypical, fixed, and one-dimensional views of architecture and the city and to look for more nuanced understandings instead. As such, *embodied utopianisms of care* could not only be helpful for tackling *noir urban scholarship* and stories of urban dystopia in decline (Pow 2015), but also depictions of capitalism or biopolitical power as all-encompassing. As Negri himself has stressed, "[t]he greater the critique of the city and its fading horizon, the more the metropolis becomes an endless horizon, the more this junkspace […] takes on an extraordinary physicality" (Negri 2009, p. 48). Thus, the more such spaces are conceptualised as all-encompassing, the more this might actually become a self-fulfilling prophecy, supporting a notion of defeat. Instead, it is necessary to actively search for more nuanced and differentiated accounts, for "movement and possibility, [and an] indeterminacy within the modern space of fullness and closure." (Gibson-Graham 2006b, p. 90, own insertion). Instead of proclaiming ourselves victims to a totalising force, it is therefore necessary to claim that part of it that is always "in motion, providing a space of becoming, of undecidability" (ibid., pp. 89–90) and "rendering the niches and gaps that always remain, as productive, emancipatory, and potentially innovative." (Knierbein 2020, unpublished, p. 416) Neoliberalism, or *Empire*, in this sense, are essentially composed of a diverse range of (situated) social practices. Imaginative and critical thought therefore needs to be equally situated and contextualised, combined with an openness, understanding, and desire for change. We should start, therefore, by "acting as a beginner, refusing to know too much, allowing success to inspire and failure to

12 The four modes of utopian thinking as defined in *2.1 Transformative Utopianisms: Utopia as Method*.

educate, refusing to extend diagnoses too widely or too deeply." (Gibson-Graham 2006a, p. 8) J.K. Gibson-Graham emphasise "to foster a 'love of the world', as Arendt says, rather than masterful knowing, or melancholy or moralistic detachment." (ibid., p. 6) By stressing the incorporation of playfulness, unpredictability, contingency, and experimentation in intellectual thought, they therefore implicitly encourage a combination of care and utopianism as stated above.

Yet, as mentioned, since utopianism and care are imbued by normativity, they need to be subject to continuous critical scrutiny, since many claims to them can fall short by being limited in scope, inconsistent in delivery, utilitarian in intention, or co-opted by narrow interests (Madanipour 2022). As has been stated elsewhere, "crisis is an existential part of the process of capitalism [and therefore] critical gestures are internalized, recycled and exploited as formal novelty and comment" (Fischer 2012, p. 67, own insertion).

Nevertheless, exemplary projects reveal what is possible when people from differentiating areas form alliances, assume their simultaneous roles as activists and inhabitants, and act in context-specific ways. "Crucially, it is precisely the political, historical and social specificity of such [architectural projects containing a utopian dimension] that lend them transformational potential." (Coleman 2014a, p. 54, own insertion) Thus, while Tafuri shared "a peculiarly frustrating position" (Jameson 2005 [1997], p. 246) announcing that nothing can be changed "until we are in a position to change everything" (ibid., p. 251), such projects reveal that an *other* form of architecture *is* possible under the current conditions. "In short, before architecture can change, the world must change, and for the world to change, we must change (by changing it)" (Coleman 2013a, p. 163).