

Glossary

Agency	Refers to action as well as deliberate non-action of individuals as opposed to the overarching structures in society. In architecture the debate of agency is concerned with what architecture can 'do' (as a discipline, practice, or project), meaning what effects it can have on society. It is mostly part of debates calling for architecture to (re)claim its social and political responsibility.
Anti-utopianism	Refers to explicit as well as implicit <i>non-pursuit</i> of the idea of a better society, meaning any action resulting in insignificance and reproduction of the existing rather than contributing to human flourishing. A philosophy that uncritically accepts the present as the final state of affairs, either because betterment is not rendered possible or because it is already rendered ideal. Related to cynicism, nihilism, and an end of history logic. Results in spaces of insignificance.

Architecture	Refers to human-made structures supporting human activity. While architecture is part of the built environment, it sets itself apart “when it begins to say something about the world” (Goldberger 2009, p. ix). Beyond offering simple protection, architecture frames, expresses, and simultaneously defines human situatedness in time and in space. It is through architecture that society (re)defines itself in history and geography. Architecture thus has a constituting feature of society and is not to be seen as standing apart from it. “[S]pace is not a reflection of society, it is its expression. [...] space is not a photocopy of society, it is society.” (Castells 2010, p. 441) Architecture is thus the material manifestation of the social imaginary—of who we are and who we want to be as a society.
Autonomy	As a philosophical concept, the idea of autonomy was born during Enlightenment and tied to the ideal of freedom from authority to make one's own choices. (See also Cornelius Castoriadis' understanding of autonomy as outlined in subchapter 2.2 <i>Social Imaginaries</i>). In architecture, however, it translates into various meanings. Architectural autonomy is often referred to as an argument for artistic freedom evading social reality, leading to a “focus on its own features, such as type, form, composition or materiality” (Kaminer 2017, p. 10). (Other meanings, for example, are a level of freedom from society's structure [especially for Italian neorationalists, led by Rossi], or as the refusal of consumer culture [for Eisenman and American East Coast architects]) (ibid.). Neoliberalism, in contrast, promotes autonomy as a concept of individualism, independence, and self-reliance.
Care	A political concept for rethinking human relationships, putting the reciprocal neediness between people and other beings at its centre. As an analytical concept, it can shed light on ‘uncaring’ relationships underpinning social and political life. As a normative 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)

Crisis	As a modernist concept, crisis describes a situation, phase, condition, or phenomenon that is defined as 'the exception' from how things 'ought to be'. In this sense, crisis is seen as something to undo, solve, or overcome, in order to return to 'normality', whether that might be returning to the pre-crisis-condition or an altered state in the sense of a 'new normal'. Within today's socio-political context, however, crisis as an unstable phase between two stable periods no longer seems an adequate description. Meanwhile an expression of systemic contradictions, crisis has developed into an intrinsic condition of social being and "the mode of existence of modern societies on a world scale." (Lefebvre cited in Gabauer et al. 2022b, p. 11)
Dystopia	The general understanding of dystopia is a vision of society that is worse than its present condition. This broad definition however means that one person's utopia can easily be defined as another person's dystopia. For Jan Robert Bloch (the son of Ernst Bloch) what differentiates dystopia from utopia, is that while utopias are <i>made for people</i> , in a dystopia <i>people are made for it</i> . This means that a repressive collective gets constructed in which no individuality is possible (Bloch 1997). This thus defines dystopia as a nihilistic vision in which human beings cannot or should not live as a free society. It refers to oppressive social control and the illusion of a perfect society through a bureaucratic authority.
Eschatology	From the Greek <i>eschata</i> meaning <i>the doctrine of the last things</i> . Ancient eschatologies developed as promises of salvation and 'a new world order' which would emerge on the ruins of the old one. In contrast to utopias, eschatologies do not illustrate alternative societies and the worlds they inhabit, only 'the end' and salvation 'after all things'. Since theological eschatologies became secularised upon the spring of modernity, a large amount of spatial, political, and social projects were heavily marked by eschatological characteristics. Such projects furthermore were often closely linked to the idea of the <i>tabula rasa</i> (see this glossary).

Ideology	A set of idea(s), beliefs, or worldview acting as the filter through which individuals perceive and interpret reality. Ideology therefore not only mediates between the lived experience and the structure of society but is also involved in the identity formation and socialisation of individuals and groups. It is therefore a key aspect of the political (Kaminer 2017).
Presentism	An ahistorical understanding of time in which historical time is limited to a conceptualisation of the present to the extent that the past and the future are rendered meaningless. It transforms the present into an infinite continuum and is induced by an end of history logic. This book contends that globalised architecture is imbued with presentism, while simultaneously reinforcing it.
Social Imaginary	Refers to the common conceptual world of human beings made of collective stories and meaning. Anything human beings have created is a result of a shared symbolic world. It defines that which for any given society appears as 'real' and therefore what is possible—and what is not. It is the framework through which human beings interpret the world and to which their existence is inescapably tied to.
Tabula Rasa	Literally translates from Latin into <i>blank slate</i> and refers to the modernist and colonial attitude of flattening existing spatial structures before new projects could be built. It reflects the modernist claim that context would not matter. "The future was built on the annihilation of the existing." (Krasny 2019, p.12) It is furthermore tainted by an eschatological mindset—only once the old has ceased to exist can the new come into being.

Utopia	<p>The biggest challenge in tackling the topic of utopia is that there exists no fixed definition and as such there have been various attempts at redefining the concept ever since its coining by Thomas More in 1516 (More 2009 [1516]). Whereas traditional/ modernist/ blueprint utopias refer to an ideal and ultimate vision of society, processual understandings (e.g., utopia as <i>philosophy</i>, <i>concept</i>, or <i>method</i>) refer to utopia as a path rather than a goal. Most importantly, there is nothing intrinsically emancipatory, nor authoritarian to utopia(nism), since this is entirely dependent on the three dimensions of <i>function</i>, <i>form</i>, and <i>content</i>, which are all context-dependent. Architecture has traditionally been linked to blueprint utopias.</p>
Utopianism	<p>Utopianism is the general label for thinking about (theory) or pursuing (praxis) the idea of a better society on the metaphysical level. While the term <i>utopia</i> originated at a particular time and place, <i>utopianism</i> has existed in every cultural tradition and is inextricably linked to human becoming. Utopianism is deeply entrenched in architecture, since any 'good' architecture can be seen as an answer to the question of what implies a good life. While utopianism tends to be implicitly embedded in architecture (as in the wish to contribute to human flourishing), it can also be explicitly so (wishing to guide society in a particular direction). While utopianism as a critical mode of thinking receives little attention within the discipline, the high expectations for contemporary architecture in providing a good life, if not a better future, for cities and their inhabitants indicate an increased inclination towards utopian fantasies.</p>

