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The End of History: Re-Spatialization of a Utopia and Temporalization of a Dystopia

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Abstract

This article proposes a revision of the idea of the End of History as pictured by Francis Fukuyama regarding its categorization as both a utopia and a dystopia. After revisiting Fukuyama's original proposal and its amendments by the author in the following years, we use François Hartog's regimes of historicity as a theoretical tool for understanding the End of History as part of a larger phenomenon. To argue Fukuyama essentially proposes the re-spatialization of utopia, we use Reinhard Koselleck's "Temporalization of Utopia" and Fredric Jameson's "End of Temporality" as guidelines. Finally, mobilizing debates on the utopian as a background, we reflect on the political nature of ruptures of temporality to claim that the End of History, though originally a utopian text, has been temporalized as a dystopia following its implementation as a political program.

Keywords

Theory of History. Presentism. Utopia. End of History. Dystopia.

Introduction

The End of History has grown old. At least the End of History as proposed by Francis Fukuyama in 1989, following the collapse of Soviet communism, when the author claimed that the victory of liberal democracy, in its Western capitalist approach, would mark the endpoint of the ideological evolution for human societies. Of course, there would still be conflicts, and even war, for those who were still “trapped” in the wheels of History, but the final stage – according to Fukuyama – was finally clear.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in March of 2022 prompted *Time* magazine to proclaim “The Return of History” on its cover and brought Fukuyama once again to the spotlight. After a few weeks, the political scientist claimed Russia was “preparing for defeat”. The persistence of Fukuyama’s End of History in the mainstream media and public debate is generally based on misconceptions and usually ignores the fact that Fukuyama himself has fundamentally changed his mind. But despite the widespread rejection his thesis received from the start – from different authors and areas, throughout the left and right spectrum – the present article claims that something has changed in the years since its publication. While the End of History was initially viewed as a naive utopian text, it has failed in its utopian intents as a political program, and might, in this sense, be regarded as a dystopia.

This article will bring back Fukuyama’s original End of History proposal and review his amendments on the subject during the following years. We will contrast those ideas to a backdrop of theoretical advancements, focusing on François Hartog’s *presentism* as a tool for understanding such irruptions as part of a larger picture. We will also use Reinhart Koselleck’s *Temporalization of Utopia* and Fredric Jameson’s *The End of Temporality* as guidelines to frame the End of History as a process of (re)spatialization of utopia. Further on, we will borrow from Jameson and different authors’ reflections on the political nature of time and the debate on utopias and dystopias to argue that, though initially conceived as a utopian text, the End of History as a political practice is now temporalized as a dystopia. In that sense, though our later discussion focuses on the original aspects of Fukuyama’s proposal, the first section of this text brings not only Fukuyama’s original article and book, but also details the author’s changes, amendments, and revisions in the following years, as a testimony of a transitional temporality.

To the End of History and beyond

Throughout this text, we will be dealing with the most recent “End of History”. In the July 1989 issue of *The National Interest*, Francis Fukuyama, a political scientist working for the



Department of State published an article. Its title asked a question: *The End of History?* At that time, the Berlin wall was still standing – it would only be breached in November of that year –, but the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev was already setting in motion the duo *perestroika* & *glasnost*, terms that from then on became recognized worldwide as analogous to “economic restructuring” and “political transparency”, respectively.

According to Fukuyama, the end of the Cold War marked, as a possible answer to that question, the definitive choice of human societies for liberal democracy as the ultimate form of social organization – a scenario identified by the author as the “End of History”.

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. This is not to say that there will no longer be events [...] for the victory of liberalism has occurred primarily in the realm of ideas or consciousness and is as yet incomplete in the real or material world. But there are powerful reasons for believing that it is the ideal that will govern the material world in the long run (FUKUYAMA, 1989, p. 1).

Fukuyama’s proposal has two fundamental cornerstones: the political, based on the concept of democracy, and the economic, based on the liberalism of markets, both combined under an idea of History as a process provided with direction and meaning. Its publication caused both the author’s brief stardom and a barrage of criticism from all sides of the political and theoretical spectrum. Such developments led to the publication of his book *The End of History and the Last Man* in 1992, expanding the fundamentals of his article to more than four hundred pages.

The criticism was proportional to the impression the article made. At the same time, the triumphalist zeitgeist of the US-led “New World Order” has elevated Fukuyama, along with his thesis, to the unusual status of international celebrity. His presence in the media continued throughout the 1990s, amid the first “challenges” to his finalist thesis – wars in the Gulf and the Balkans, economic crises in Asia and Russia – and back to the spotlight after the events of September 11, 2001.

But Fukuyama’s appeal seems to persist. After the historical 1989, amid the myriad of authors and articles contemplating debates and theories about the end of modernity, the exhaustion of utopia, the future of Marxism and so many thematic alternatives, Fukuyama’s ideas, though contested, remain part of the political debate. Important names from the left, such as

Perry Anderson and Jacques Derrida, produced relevant and critical replies. In the conservative spectrum, among the responses to the "End of History", Samuel Huntington's idea of a "clash of civilizations" became the main opposition to the finalist notion of his former student Fukuyama.

After stating "an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism", the general picture of Fukuyama's thesis is presented. Likewise, the author's praise for the political and economic models – democracy and market liberalism – seen by him as victorious at that time, is clear. Connected to these two aspects, Fukuyama's proposal tripod is completed by the Hegelian notion of history as a process – more specifically, borrowed from the reading of Hegel by Alexandre Kojève.

Fukuyama dismisses his idea of the End of History as original, pointing out that the main propagator of such a notion is Karl Marx, who saw the direction and development of history as determined by material forces, whose contradictions would be definitively resolved when societies reached the communist stage. He recalls, however, that Marx borrowed "the concept of history as a dialectical process with a beginning, middle and end" from Hegel, who "believed that history culminated in an absolute moment – a moment in which a final, rational form of society and state became victorious" (FUKUYAMA, 1989, p. 2).

At the end of History, the liberal state would recognize and protect men's right to freedom and to choose a government by democratic consensus. For Kojève, such a "universal homogeneous state" was fulfilled in post-war European countries, whose main objective was, in fact, modest: the creation of a common market, which later evolved into the current European Union.

With fascism and communism "defeated", Fukuyama sees religion and nationalism as the other two possible "ideological challengers" to liberalism. According to him, only Islam and its theocratic state effectively present an alternative model to communism and liberalism, but with little appeal in the non-Islamic world, with no capacity to become a universal alternative – since Islamic faith would be a personal choice in a democratic and liberal society.

The other "contradiction" capable of becoming a challenge to liberalism would be nationalism and other forms of racial and ethnic exacerbation. As the fundamental causes of the two great wars, those continued as threats "both in the third world" and in "post-historical parts of Europe", such as Germany and Ireland. Fukuyama argues, however, that there are different types of nationalism – "ranging from mild cultural nostalgia to highly elaborate and organized doctrines, such as National Socialism", – and only systematic and expansionist nationalism, such as the latter, would present itself as a challenge. The author claims most nationalist movements are limited to the desire for independence and recognition from another dominant group, a contradiction that would be resolved within an effective democracy.



By the end of his article, Fukuyama reinforces the division of the world between states that “continue in history” and “post-historical” ones. While admitting communism will still be defended, the author projects it would no longer have any significance or claim to the vanguard of human history, and its death would reduce the chances of large-scale conflicts between nation-states. But he concedes that conflicts would continue, now between states “still in history” and those that “have already reached the end of history”. Ethnic and nationalist violence could keep growing and cause conflicts even in “post-historic” states, bringing terrorism to a leading role in the international agenda.

Fukuyama gets into a theme that he would expand on in his book. The nature of humanity that would emerge in post-history would bring a human being devoid of the Hegelian “struggle for recognition”, which is ultimately identified by Fukuyama as the engine that drives societies towards a liberal and democratic outcome.

In *The End of History and the Last Man*, we see the author trying to reframe the debate raised by his original article, moving away from the post-Cold War triumphalism, to the affirmation of a universal history, “a coherent and directional History of mankind that will eventually lead the greater part of humanity to liberal democracy”. While Fukuyama’s conclusion seems less optimistic than his original article, the author accepts the seeming possibility that liberty and equality may lead to dissatisfaction, in a way that “those who remain dissatisfied will always have the potential to restart history” (FUKUYAMA, 1992, p. 334).

Of course, the verdict that history was over, coming directly from the US government offices brought about a lot of criticism, which persists decades later. In particular, the notion of the “Clash of Civilizations”, by Samuel Huntington (1927-2008), Fukuyama’s teacher, was popularized as the “rival” paradigm to the idea of the End of History. Despite being widely recognized as an antithesis to the End of History, Huntington’s civilizational paradigm should be seen as a natural extension of his previous work (SAVOLDI, 2021, p. 74). Introduced in the early 1990s, the idea received a new lease of life after the attacks of September 11, 2001. While Fukuyama’s triumphalist proposal seemed doomed, the civilizational dialectic of conflict rose to the spotlight. A week after the tragedy, an article in the Washington Post showed how both authors gained relevance in the public debate, pointing out that although “the two theories may suffer from nearly lethal cases of overstatement and oversimplification [...], they’re the theoretical elephants in the room”, and that “the old debate about capitalism vs. communism has been replaced by Fukuyama vs. Huntington (ACHELBACH, 2001, n.p.)

Five years after the 1989 milestone, Fukuyama produced the first proper balance of his thesis focusing on the “accusation” that the End of History was nothing more than a sign of his

optimism after the end of the Cold War. His reply points out that the discernment of a Universal History, or an eventual tendency of societies towards liberal democracy is not intrinsically positive, but, on the contrary, “it is impossible to be anything but pessimistic” about it (FUKUYAMA, 1995, p. 43). In 1999, ten years after his original article, Fukuyama published *Second Thoughts: The Last Man in a Bottle* – with a theme that he would later expand on in the book *Our Posthuman Future – Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*. Turning to debates on post-humanity, a subject he would explore in the following years, the author admits that “History cannot come to an end as long as modern natural science has no end”. To explain “why the end of history was essentially wrong,” Fukuyama completely changes his argument. Human history would end, he says, but not in the way he argued in his 1989 article. For the End of History to be possible, as originally thought, two things would be necessary. The first is a clear conceptualization of what defines human nature. If the concept of human is fleeting, historically malleable, and socially constructed, then no model of society – even liberal democracy – is capable of definitively satisfying the demands of individuals.

The second condition for the End of History would be the end of science. Although humanity is going through a period in which technologies – especially information technology – are seen as benign by themselves, the author argues that there is no guarantee that this will continue in the long term. And when embarking on the advances of biotechnology, from the most predictable to the most speculative, Fukuyama finds another dead end for his theory. The author sees the advance in neuropharmacology as a challenge to the engine of History identified by Hegel, interpreted by Kojève and appropriated in his arguments: the struggle for recognition, as “the dissatisfaction with our current situation, which has been the ground for History as such, suddenly vanish, not as a result of liberal democracy, but because we have suddenly discovered how to alter that bit of brain chemistry that was the source of the problem in the first place” (FUKUYAMA, 1999, p. 17).

Fukuyama’s focus on the post-human was interrupted by the events of September 11, 2001, and its consequences – especially the war unleashed by President George W. Bush in Iraq, and the seemingly “victory” of the clash of civilizations paradigm. In his first article after the attacks, the author asked if *Has History Started Again?*, claiming that cultural myopia and naivety make the West think that its values are attractive and “universal”. More than a sense of revenge for recent geopolitical episodes, the reaction of Islam to Western values would be a rejection to several violent aspects of modernity itself. Despite continuing to believe in the expansion of liberal democracy in the long run, Fukuyama no longer saw inevitability in the historical process (FUKUYAMA, 2002, p. 7).



In 2006, Fukuyama published an article in *The New York Times*, withdrawing his support for the neoconservative war stance. At the time, the author claimed the interventionism of the United States was similar to Leninism, given the defense that “history can be pushed along with the right application of power and will”. Once again the author defends his picture of the End of History, rebutting the interpretation that it was a “neoconservative tract”, and presenting it as “an argument about modernization”, with “a kind of Marxist argument for the existence of a long-term process of social evolution, but one that terminates in liberal democracy rather than communism” (FUKUYAMA, 2006, n.p.).

If the “war on terrorism” brought a fundamental challenge to the political aspect of his thesis, its other fundamental pillar, the economic one, was confronted at the end of the 2000s with a crisis that brought the US economy near to a generational Great Depression. In response to such a scenario, Fukuyama seems to question his verdict that history was over.

In *The Future of History*, the author considers whether liberal democracy would be able to survive the decline of the middle class. In a period of strong instability in international capitalism, he credits the loss of credibility and sustainability, even for social democracy, whose agenda became limited to the increasingly difficult task of maintaining the achievements of the welfare state, pointing out that “there are a lot of reasons to think that inequality will continue to worsen”, since “elites in all societies use their superior access to the political system to protect their interests”. Fukuyama’s pessimism, though disguised in the hope of a new history, has a prophetic tone about the danger of how societies can react to the idea of globalization as a villain. That would come with a populist nationalism combining “ideas from both the left and the right, detached from the agenda of the marginalized groups that constitute the existing progressive movement” with a “critique of the elites that allowed the benefit of the many to be sacrificed to that of the few” (FUKUYAMA, 2012, p. 61).

Donald Trump’s election to the presidency of the United States four years after the writing of such an article confirms some of Francis Fukuyama’s fears. In an article published shortly after the billionaire’s victory, the author compares the situation with the recent Brexit – the United Kingdom’s departure from the European Union – and its effects on the growing nationalist wave that has spread across that continent. In Hungary, Viktor Orban, leader of an important democratic country at the heart of the bloc, proclaimed the end of liberal democracy and its replacement by a new model, the “illiberal democracy” (JANJEVIC, 2018, n.p.).

Fukuyama saw Trump’s presidency as the “end of an era”, in which the American democratic model served as a reference for the world, with the country “changing sides”, from a liberal nation to a populist-nationalist stronghold. The challenges to the Western model, the

author points out, no longer come from China or another superpower, but from within, since “the democratic part of the political system is rising against the liberal part, and threatening to use its apparent legitimacy to rip apart the rules that have heretofore constrained behavior, anchoring an open and tolerant world” (FUKUYAMA, 2016).

The trap of Presentism

If the idea of an “end” necessarily brings along the notion of a process, the idea of “History” – and Fukuyama goes further: “Universal History” – needs to be understood, in order to escape the obvious and silly counter-argument that “events keep happening”. As Hannah Arendt points out, this modern concept of History as a process “separates the modern age from the past more profoundly than any other single idea”, as it frees the individual event from universal meaning. The process acquired a “monopoly of universality and significance” (ARENDR, 1961, p. 64).

François Hartog, when advancing the notion of regimes of historicity, points to the different forms of articulation between the categories “past”, “present” and “future”, and how the emphasis on each one of them shapes the experience of time of societies, especially in the West. The old regime of historicity is based on the past and lessons from history (*historia magistra vitae*). Focused on the achievements of the past, the good examples and the ideal model to be followed are behind us. Hartog sees the creation of this regime in Greece during the 4th century BC, and its predominance – not without disputes – until the mid-18th century (HARTOG, 2013a). Then, concepts such as process, progress, and direction are added to the notion of History, expressed, above all, in the ideas of a promising future. This is the modern regime of historicity, bringing along the utopias that illuminate the actions of the present. Time takes center stage, with the French Revolution in 1789 as a symbolic landmark. In this scope, comes along the Kantian outline of a universal civilization, the Hegelian notion of History as synthesis and resolution of the human spirit, as well as the Marxist interpretation of the class struggle as the engine that will lead societies to a socialist outcome.

The 20th century, however, undermined a model that seemed to be consolidated. From different aspects, the perception of a future-oriented time was questioned. The signs of this weakening are quite relevant. Hartog recalls the civilizational approaches of Toynbee, Spengler, and his *Decline of the West*, as well as Theodor Lessing, who considered History a kind of belief. Along the same lines, Hartog recalls the importance of Claude Levi-Strauss’ structuralist approach, comparing them with the Braudelian view of the historical process and its “durations”.



Despite the horrific events of the 20th century causing such reflux in the idea of History as a “positive” process, along with reflections on the weakening of the cumulative notion of historical progress, Hartog draws attention to this return of such a teleological vision after 1989 – referring directly to Fukuyama and Huntington – pointing to the fragility, both the triumphalist proposal of the former and the civilizational scheme of the latter. As for Fukuyama’s proposal, Hartog notes that the quick and confusing reception around a “misunderstood title” is “certainly a sign of something”. But the replica of Huntington’s civilizational thesis, for Hartog, does not differ in essence from Fukuyama’s idea, since both seek support in “temporal schemes mobilized by universal histories linked to 19th-century philosophies of history and colonial empires” (HARTOG, 2013b, p. 178). Hartog posits both as symptoms of a transition from his “modern regime” to the “presentist regime” of historicity.

But if Huntington’s answer prevents the triumphalism that sees a universal history on the horizon, and also projects a new dynamic for the future of societies, would the “clash of civilizations” be a resistance to presentism? Hartog himself points out Huntington’s proposal as “wider and more durable” than Fukuyama’s. We are no longer on the side of Kant and Hegel, according to Hartog, but of Toynbee, and Spengler, and under the long duration of Braudel, with that fear of the future as “an invitation to retreat”.

In modernity, the belief in History replaced theology as the source of meaning for societies. Hartog notes a tenuous difference between two possibilities for the practice of this same belief: to have faith in History as one believes in God, a higher ground of belief, and, at a lower level, the belief that there is a History taking place, with a certain order that can be apprehended, remembered, and made use of (HARTOG, 2013c, p. 17).

In this sense, we can identify in the proposals of both Fukuyama and Huntington, similarities and fundamental differences regarding faith in History. While the End of History depends on this faith in History and its outcome, the proposal for a Clash of Civilizations, while still believing in History and discerning some patterns from it, comes from a lower level of historical determinism. In the latter, the belief gives way to a fear of the future, as History becomes a threat to the present, which must be protected. If from now on, the reality is the *ad eternum* clash between civilizations, it becomes impossible to overcome the present.

Both proposals, the homogenization of the “End of History”, or the fragmentation into different civilizations for a constant “clash”, bring different aspects of the phenomenon recognized as globalization, which puts not only History, but the historian’s own praxis, under new kinds of pressure. The emergence of “global history”, according to Hartog, puts globalization in a place analogous to that of modernization in the 1950s-1960s (or even civilization in the early 19th

century). In historiographical practice, the possibilities to evade this kind of pressure come in the form of what Hartog calls a “postmodern temptation”, bringing along a multiplicity of memories, alternative histories, and the pursuit of connections between them.

Among these alternatives, Fukuyama’s proposal, disregarded for evoking the worn-out belief in the historical process, also puts an end to it. While there are signs we are living in a new regime of temporality, the weakening of this belief in a Universal History can also be seen as proof that faith in History was misplaced. Hartog sees clear indications that we no longer believe in such a concept of History, although we continue to use it – politics, media, and historians, who still believe in History as a “pending task” (HARTOG, 2013c, p. 304) – at least until another idea of History comes along to take center stage.

One of the aspects that make Fukuyama’s production so vulnerable to criticism is his attempt to interpret recent or ongoing events under the lens of his End of History proposal. Hartog’s historicity regimes approach, on the other hand, “addresses these phenomena obliquely, asking what temporalities structure and govern them”, looking for “from which order of time are they the symptoms or the messengers”, and “what crisis of time do they sign” (HARTOG, 2013a, p. 26).

We may avoid the temptation of simply fitting Fukuyama’s proposal in a theoretical framework assembled by Hartog: if Fukuyama’s End of History can be seen as one of the many manifestations of the presentist regime of historicity, we may also see the diagnosis that we are living in presentist times as a symptom of such a triumphalist hangover, as proposed by Fukuyama, despite its failure as a real-world political program in the following years.

In an argument that goes along with Fukuyama’s appeal to transhumanism, Zoltán Boldizsár Simon states that “we were never presentists”, contesting Hartog’s vision of the future (SIMON, 2016). For Simon, our new temporality brings a relationship with the future based on technology, different from the modern period, in which the future was utopian. This change would bring about a need for a reinterpretation of the historical process itself in the work of historians. The author argues that the 20th century has made us skeptical of the notion of History as a directional process provided with meaning, but not regarding the possibility of changes brought about by the future.

Joining Koselleck, Hartog sees that modern historical time, put into motion by the tension between past and future, suffers a rupture, as the “field of experience” and the “horizon of expectation” move away from each other. At the End of History imagined by Fukuyama, there seems to be a coincidence between the fields of experience (the lessons of History that lead us to a predetermined path), and the expectation (there is nothing beyond the end of that path). The outcome is the same: the exhaustion of a regime of experience of time.



Thinking temporalities through the tension between utopias and dystopias allows us to speculate beyond the presentist idea of a closed future. That is because portraying utopian or dystopian expectations in the present or in the past, not in the future, is something new. That is a scenario that fits Hartog's presentist regime, with an overwhelming present as a new experience of time, engulfing past and future, which would partly explain the collapse of utopias, and goes along with dystopian social and political representations. Amid this "adverse temporality", it is challenging to extend the belief in a positive *telos* beyond the dystopian present. As Julio Benthivoglio puts it, religious utopias and Marxism are still up to this task, resisting as utopian biases capable of breaking through presentism (BENTIVOGLIO, 2020, p. 398).

The re-spatialization of a utopia and the temporalization of a dystopia

To move further on our approach toward the End of History, we might look at it through the lens of the debate on utopia. First, we argue Fukuyama's text can be seen as a utopian text in its inception, which supports the notion that it fundamentally proposes the re-spatialization of utopia. Further on, we point to the failure of that same utopian End of History as a political program, prompting its temporalization as a dystopia.

We may carefully advance these ideas in a preliminary fashion, hoping it will spark further discussion, while also keeping in mind the extensive background of the conceptual debate on utopias and dystopias. Lyman Tower Sargent alerts that "the central problem with most approaches to utopianism is the attempt to use a single dimension to explain a multi-dimensional phenomenon" (SARGENT, 1994, p. 3), while Ruth Levitas reminds us that "the concept itself is an ideological battleground" (LEVITAS, 2010, p. 4). Fredric Jameson points to the fact that "just as the literary value of the form is subject to permanent doubt, so also its political status is structurally ambiguous", as the "fluctuations of its historical context do nothing to resolve this variability" (JAMESON, 2005, xi).

This elusive nature of the utopia is a condition that reinforces the fact that "its forms and functions, as well as its explicit content, are historically variable" (LEVITAS, 2013, p. 4). Using Jameson's approach to the subject and the notion that our capacity to formulate utopias is directly related to our zeitgeist, since "our imaginations are hostage to our own mode of production" (JAMESON, 2003, xiii), the claim that Fukuyama's original text might be considered utopian (maybe even a "capitalist utopia") in its conception – it was published before the fall of the Berlin Wall, foreseeing a universal homogenous liberal-free-market-world – though not undisputed, is well-placed.

It's worthwhile to note that Fukuyama barely uses the term "utopia" in his 1992 book. There are only two occurrences: the first cites Henry Kissinger, who thought "it was Utopian to try to reform the fundamental political and social structures of hostile powers like the USSR" (FUKUYAMA, 1992, p. 8). The other one is derogative to the "Marxist end of history" and its plan for the "achievement of a global communist Utopia that would end class struggle once and for all" (FUKUYAMA, 1992, p. 65). This negative connotation to the utopian was predominant in the West at the time, echoing the Cold War and its aftermath, when Utopia was used as a synonym for totalitarianism, the idea of a "program which neglected human frailty and original sin, and betrayed a will to uniformity and the ideal purity of a perfect system that always had to be imposed by force on its imperfect and reluctant subjects" (JAMESON, 2003, xi).

The incorporation of utopia in the philosophy of History has its genesis mapped by Koselleck, who locates this process in the second half of the 18th century – the 1770 book *The Year 2440* by Louis-Sébastien Mercier would be the first to place utopia in the temporal dimension of the future. There were utopias located temporally in the past, but "the space of experience of these traditional utopias was primarily spatial and so was its mode of representation", Those "counter worlds", spaces of the planet that had been unexplored until then, were narrated by the discoverers on their return, bringing potential examples of distinct and ideal states and societies. Even with the use of the Moon, outer space, or the depths of the Earth, the exhaustion of unknown areas limited the possibilities of locating utopias on our planet – as Koselleck points out, "utopian spaces had been surpassed by experience" (KOSELLECK, 2002, p. 86). For that, it was necessary to "shift to the future", making the imagined perfection from other spaces to be temporalized, bringing utopia in line with Enlightenment philosophers. Koselleck goes further and points to a book published in 1918 by Carl Schmitt, as an example of a negative utopia. *Die Buribunken* is a satire on utopianism and the belief in the progress of modernity, in which "history" is only produced and fulfilled as it is written in diaries kept by all the characters of this society. For Koselleck, the views of Mercier and Schmitt were confirmed in an inverse or distorted way. Since real history is always different from what we are capable of imagining, utopias are doomed to fail.

The "end of modernity" also makes us question the role of the temporal dimension of History, giving way to its spatial dimension, or as Fredric Jameson points out, "that space was supposed to replace time in the general ontological scheme of things" (JAMESON, 2003, p. 695). The modernization of Western societies, generally seen as homogeneous, was a most irregular and unequal process. Even throughout the "Enlightened" Europe, at least until the time frame of World War II, there was a large number of different societies living simultaneously in different stages of incomplete modernization, sharing different temporalities. The reduction and disappearance



of these pre-modern societies, as their simultaneous existence with modern communities, allowed the leap from one temporality to another based on spatial displacement – that is what eventually made the perception of temporality itself unfeasible, since now there is no basis for comparison for a postmodern generation. The overwhelming integration brought by imperialism and globalization does not necessarily produce the same result. While for imperialism, the “delay” between metropolis and colony is presupposed, the simultaneity of globalization framed those societies at the same pace, suppressing not only the different temporalities between them but also annihilating their spatial separation.

The volatile transition between the structures of modernity and the culture of postmodernity brings along a sensation of political alternation between left and right, progressivism and conservatism. Though the anguish and hope that technological transformations bring do not differ from previous centuries, what sets our temporality apart would be the inability to imagine great utopias, which leaves us trapped in a framework of “tendencies” that, “by definition, are never fully reached” (JAMESON, 2003, p. 717). Such an end to temporality may also fit Fukuyama’s original arguments, while we argue that the End of History fundamentally proposes a (re)spatialization of Utopia, ideally reversing the process Reinhard Koselleck identified as the “Temporalization of Utopia”. When Fukuyama uses the image of History as a road, and societies as cars that would eventually reach the same destination, the West was reinvented as the space where History has ended. Utopia was no longer in the future, as its temporalization explained by Koselleck was now brought back to the limits of space. The West became the ultimate space of utopia.

Fukuyama’s picture of states that have reached the end of History and states that have not, is also consonant with another fundamental aspect of utopia, that of *exclusion*. As Jameson points out, this distinction in spatial terms supports the utopian category of totality, a combination of closure and system, which assures the existence of *otherness*. Besides the utopian transformation of reality, “these utopian spaces are thus totalities, whatever their scale; they are symbolic of a world transformed, and as such, they must posit limits, boundaries between the utopian and the nonutopian” (JAMESON, 2010, p. 25).

A different argument reads Fukuyama’s End of History as an anti-utopian text (DYSON, 2022, p. 769), identifying it as an argument in support of the *status quo*. Drawing utopia and dystopia not as opposites, but in a “continuum of hope and despair”, with the pole of despair occupied by the anti-utopia. In an anti-utopia, “attempts to think beyond the status quo are doomed to produce a society much worse than that of the present” (DYSON, 2022, p. 767). Accordingly, the author claims Fukuyama’s framework dismisses the possibility of a better future since we were supposedly living in the best of all possible worlds by the end of the 20th century.

In that sense, we favor Jameson's different approach to the category of anti-utopian as texts that see "attempts to realize Utopia necessarily end up in violence and totalitarianism" (JAMESON, 2005, p.142), considering it as more of a "warning" against the eventual dangers of utopias. Jameson proposes the label of anti-utopian to Orwellian-like futures "given the way in which they are informed by a central passion to denounce and to warn against Utopian programs in the political realm". In this sense, the concept of anti-utopia as a "fear of utopia" – despite its connection to utopia as its source – does not suit Fukuyama's End of History picture.

To consider Fukuyama's text anti-utopian in this context, one should also ignore the programmatic and teleological nature still present in it. Though his End of History arguments claim the ideological disputes in the political realm have come to an end, the author clearly emphasizes the distant and utopic scenario of a supposed universal homogenous liberal democratic state.

While there is room for debate regarding this version of the End of History, the presentist pressure and its aspect of a "fulfilled utopia" in an exhausted temporality is an argument to support the claim that Fukuyama's text would be "more *uchronic* than *utopic*" (MARQUES, 2015, p. 125), which brings the idea that it expresses itself in a "non-time" more than in a "non-place".

Thinking of utopia and dystopia as useful categories for the analysis of our temporality takes into account the perception that, over the last century, dystopia has taken the place of utopianism as the predominant zeitgeist (VIEIRA, 2020, p. 352). When we question the temptation to define our present as "beyond utopia" – despite the signs of a post-utopian temporality, in which the historical imagination has discouraged dreams that once fueled projects – the very relationship between utopias and dystopias is a safeguard that guarantees the existence of both. Every utopia presupposes a dystopia, be it an unsatisfactory present to be altered by the former, or a future whose utopian ideal has been corrupted by the real world. Both intrinsically propose changes in the social order of the future, and are, in these terms, revolutionary. Because they do not operate as a simple inversion of each other, we follow Michael Gordin, Helen Tilley, and Gyan Prakash on the idea that dystopias are "typically considered a utopia gone wrong", or "one (utopia) that functions for a particular segment of society" but, crucially, that "carry the aspect of lived experience" (GORDIN; TILLEY; PRAKASH, 2010, p. 1). In this aspect, both utopias and dystopias can be understood as "stories of the present" used to articulate the past and future. That makes dystopias the actual societies historians analyze in their research.

Tom Moylan offers the concept of "critical utopia" – one that considers the utopian limitations, texts that "reject utopia as a blueprint while preserving it as a dream" (MOYLAN, 2014, p. 10) – a notion that shaped the correspondent idea of "critical dystopia", a text that critiques the present while still offering "explorations of the appositional spaces and possibilities from which



the next round of political activism can derive imaginative sustenance and inspiration" (MOYLAN, 2000, p. XV). Another well-established approach by Levitas offers three possible aspects of the utopian: in terms of its *content* – what a good society would be –, its *form* – whether a literary fiction or a political vision, for example – and its *function*, – largely the approach to utopia in the Marxist tradition, "either a negative function of preventing social change or a positive function of facilitating it" (LEVITAS, 2010, p. 6). In that sense, other than being conceived as a utopian text regarding its content, Fukuyama's text may also be thought of as a political program.

As Slavoj Žižek points out bluntly, "it is easy to make fun of Fukuyama's notion of the End of History, but the majority today is "Fukuyamaian": liberal-democratic capitalism is accepted as the finally-found formula of the best possible society" (ŽIZEK, 2008, p. 37). Levitas reminds us that though a normative approach may exclude "evil utopias" as a contradiction, that veto would produce misleading conclusions based on the implications that some utopias are better than others. For that, the author favors more vague boundaries to the concept as "less problematic" than more restrictive definitions of utopias and dystopias (LEVITAS, 2010, p. 212).

That is the case for right-wing utopias, be it the neoliberal utopia and its freedom of markets mantra, or the neoconservative utopia and its appeal to tradition – both relying on the need for a strong state to safeguard market freedom and authority. As the author points out, there is no doubt those utopias express a desired society. Even if we may be critical, the fact that it does not "maximize human happiness" does not mean it is not a utopia – we can only say it is "someone else's utopia", or extrapolate it and portray it as dystopia – which, like utopia, is not necessarily fictional in form (LEVITAS, 2010, p. 216).

In that sense, Moylan offers a glimpse into where the End of History has led us:

We live in a world shaped by capitalism in its global stage, generally subject to authoritarian power (be it soft or hard, be it wrapped in an aura of democracy or served straight in varying degrees of overt control). In this world, nature (humanity included) is alienated, reified, exploited, oppressed and ultimately destroyed in some way or other. In this world, ecological, economic, political and cultural crises are increasingly the norm. The name of this world is dystopia (over against the misrepresentation of itself as utopia). While there are no dominant pictures of a Big Brother, there are the now familiar slogans: there is no alternative, history is over (MOYLAN, 2013, p. 42).

The End of History utopian failure dwells not in the fact wars still happen, or communism and Islam became appealing options for the West, but in the perception that Fukuyama's political

program followed the canonical fate of utopias and went on to produce a dystopian world – not necessarily in the author’s bored “last man” terms. Despite the long list of events that counter the End of History thesis – from Brexit to the right-wing nationalism victories all over the world, from the 2008 financial crisis to the rise of Hungary’s Orban “illiberal democracy” (a proto-fascist version of the Fukuyama’s liberal utopia) – we may not look into these events for “proofs” of our changing temporality. That would repeat the same pattern for which Fukuyama’s tautological short-term and event-centered approach is mostly criticized. In this aspect, as Arthur Ávila points out, the idea of the End of History is not limited to empirically observable transformations but is a byproduct of “political choices that change the temporality of late capitalism” (ÁVILA, 2018, p. 260).

The role of the traumatic events of the 20th century, seen by many as a cause for the dissolution of the idea of progress, and for defining a new apprehension of time by societies, is questioned by Maria Inés Mudrovcic, who offers us a complementary aspect for Hartog’s regimes of historicity. While the catastrophes of the 20th century brought a feeling of imprisonment in the present, they “did not break the political order which gave them birth (the modern secular state)” (MUDROVCIC, 2014, p. 3). The ruptures in how societies experienced time would come from political landmarks such as the French Revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall. This notion of time as a political construct is a fundamental part of modernity. Even the idea that modernity is over is unable to change that, since the post-modern solution brings a multiplicity of new histories that are “ordered diachronically to produce a scale of development which defines ‘progress’ in terms of the projection of certain people’s presents as other people’s futures, at the level of the development of history as a whole” (OSBORNE, 1995, p. 17), with these criteria of progress being geopolitically influenced by discourses of colonialism and imperialism. As “modernities grow old”, post-modernities claim that has been a radical change in certain societies, enough to distinguish them from the definition of modern ones.

As the political crisis of utopia reflects the crisis of representation in postmodernity, Jameson argues that traditional utopia has come to a halt after the collapse of socialism, and we join this idea by proposing that Fukuyama’s End of History was conceived as a utopia at the closing window of modernity – after all, what are (were?) utopias if not “byproducts of Western modernity”? For its apparent oversimplification, it also answers to the idea that the construction of utopias, bound to bear in these “transitional periods”, must “respond to specific dilemmas and offer to solve fundamental social problems to which the Utopian believes himself to hold the key (JAMESON, 2005, p. 11). In its dystopian aspect, The End of History becomes a “future that is simply a prolongation of our capitalist present” (JAMESON, 2005, p. 228) – thereby, a fertile ground for new kinds of utopia that portray future as disruption from that *status quo*.



Fukuyama's theoretical picture bears much in common with all those transitional aspects identified by analysts of the "end of modernity". Leaving the triumphal tone behind, Fukuyama's End of History combines aspects of both modernity and its decline, being criticized as the last gasp of outdated modernity, and also as just another misplaced rupture of postmodernity. As Sargent puts it, "the much-heralded "end of Utopia" marked by the changes in Eastern Europe turns out to be just the opposite", as the "Eastern Europeans have overthrown an old Utopia become dystopia in the name of a new Utopia that is already becoming a dystopia, as it has been for some time for many in the West" (SARGENT, 1994, p. 26). As pointed out, we hope our initial retrospective that goes beyond Fukuyama's original article, detailing the author's amendments and revisions to his thesis served as a testimony of this elusive and transitional temporality. Despite our account of Fukuyama's End of History as a utopian text, the original dystopian aspect of the author's depressed "last man", no longer driven by the Hegelian struggle for recognition, also points to this transitional dynamic of utopias and dystopias as fertile ground for each other.

The latest End of History was conceived at the eleventh hour of modernity just to be pronounced dead in a postmodern framework that is able to support and conceive multiple and different utopias and dystopias – a new temporality beyond homogeneity, where "pluralisms are the answer to repressive unities and identities of all kinds", and when the "utopian becomes, then, not the commitment to a specific machinery or blueprint, but rather the commitment to imagining possible Utopias as such, in their greatest variety of forms" (JAMESON, 2005, p. 217). In this context of multiple utopian (and dystopian) imaginations lies our argument for the "re-spatialization of a utopia" and "temporalization of a dystopia". Despite our urge to call it already a "past dystopia" – the first draft of this paper even did so – under the pressure of presentism and the hypertrophic temporality it ensues, the End of History as a fulfilled dystopia – spread through the past, present, and possible future – might as well be considered in its *dyschronic* aspect: not only a "bad place", but also a "bad time".

A byproduct of modernity, the End of History believed in History as a process, in a liberal democratic utopia, in a future that "has already arrived". At the same time, it marks the end of modernity, as our faith in history is no longer useful and, now, we have to deal with the supposed lack of options to escape the present. As Sargent puts it, "this cycle of hope, failure, despair, and the rejection of hope altogether, followed by the renewal of hope seems to be the basic pattern of attitudes to social change" (SARGENT, 1994. p. 28). While the temporalization of the End of History as a dystopia may be a symptom of a larger process, its political mobilization as a way to undermine democracy and prevent change may also, inevitably, spark new and multiple utopian hopes.

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