Occupy the Future

Summary

Taking as its starting point the widespread calls within the Occupy movement to 'Occupy the Future', this chapter examines some ways in which time – in particular, the future – is being articulated as a form of commons. Responding to a growing sense that the future is being foreclosed by the unsustainable and destructive practices of the present, calls to occupy the future are motivated by appeals to intergenerational justice. Developing the concept of a temporal commons, the chapter explores the aesthetic figures through which time and the future are represented in posters, artworks, and advertisements that advocate for future justice. In particular, it analyses the figure of 'future generations' in discourses concerning the temporal commons. In contrast to attempts to 'represent' future generations in the present, thus rendering them calculable and knowable, the chapter argues that the promise of the call to 'occupy the future' does not lie in techniques for rendering the future co-present, but instead comes from an attunement to forms of 'time without me'.

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Occupy the Future

> 'Global capitalism is *foreclosing on our future* by tearing apart the fabric of our homes, communities, and ecosystems. While our resources go to bail out Wall Street, corporations are destabilizing our climate, fouling our waters, selling us food that makes us sick, and destroying the very life-giving systems that we depend on.' (Movement Generation, 2011).

A remarkable feature of the Occupy movement has been the widespread calls for protestors to 'Occupy the Future', reclaiming time as a form of commons: something that is collectively practised, shared, and distributed. In one striking poster (Figure 1), a faceless businessman, coloured in red and with an angel's halo and a devil's tail, walks towards a little girl holding a large banner saying 'Occupy your future'. The girl stands in front of a crowd of protestors, and stands firm on the bottom edge of the image. The businessman, by contrast, despite his size is lost in the middle of the image, anchorless in a sea of grey. The little girl, through her age and gender, embodies conventions of purity and reproductive futurity; the crowd behind her offer the strength to overcome the satanic corporate world. The image articulates a theological temporality of innocence, salvation, and fulfilment.
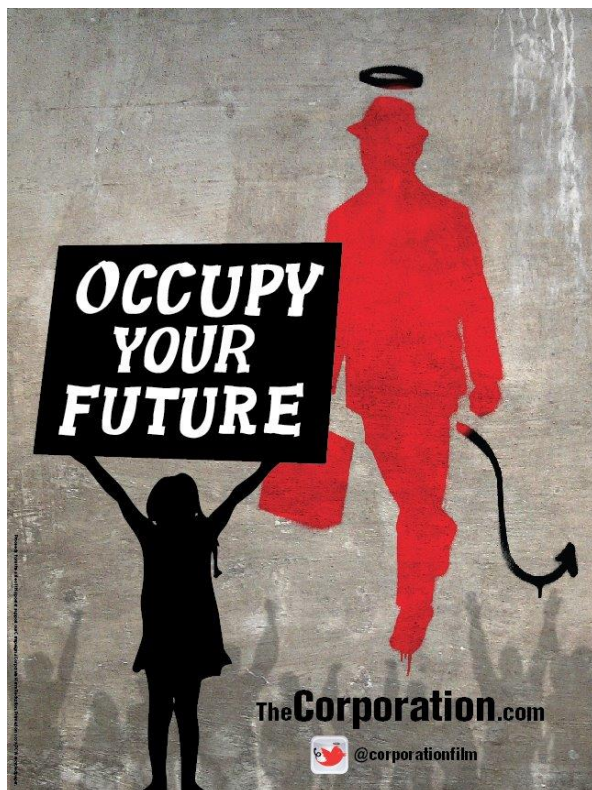
In this chapter, I examine the ways in which time – in particular, the future – can be conceptualized and 'occupied' as a form of commons. Exploring the aesthetic strategies through which time and the future are figured in posters, artworks, and advertisements that campaign for future justice (see also Mitchell, 2013), I highlight four key aesthetic figures of the temporal commons: foreclosure; obduracy; prefiguration; and future generations. Underlying each of these figures is an insistence on the plenitude, openness, and communal nature of an occupied future, in contrast to the isolated, austere, and privatised futures presaged by contemporary capitalism. In distinction to attempts to 'represent' occupied

futures in the present, thus rendering them calculable and co-present, I will argue that the promise of the call to 'occupy the future' comes from an attunement to forms of temporality that recover a sense of the future as unknown, incalculable, but insisting within alternative practices in the present.

The temporal register evident in the rhetoric of Occupy the Future, which insists on reclaiming the future as a commons and thereby opposing the individualisation and privatisation of the future, is a striking counterpoint – and theoretical challenge – to the largely spatial vocabularies and aesthetics of the commons. It does not represent an avant-gardist emphasis on leading an advance party towards a future that is known in advance, but a determination to figure or 'prefigure' alternative futures in the present (see de Angelis, 2007). In this chapter, then, I analyse some 'figures' of futurity in Occupy the Future and related campaigns for intergenerational justice.

Figuration is a complex aesthetic practice with roots in the semiotics of Western Christian realism and the temporalities of progress, fulfilment, apocalypse and salvation that are associated with this tradition. Figures establish connections between events or persons so that one signifies itself and a second, and this second involves the fulfilment of the first (Auerbach, 2003). Figuration has many intersecting meanings: figures are drawings, graphic representations, faces (as with the French 'figure'), calculations, and spatial arrangements in rhetoric. As Donna Haraway (2007:11) writes, 'Figures do not have to be representational and mimetic, but they do have to be tropic; that is, they cannot be literal and self-identical. Figures must involve at least some kind of displacement that can trouble identifications and certainties. Figurations arc performative images that can be inhabited. Verbal or visual, figurations can be condensed maps of contestable worlds'. Figures carry *authority*: they make claims that demand a response (see Brigstocke, Dawney & Blencowe, forthcoming; Brigstocke, 2013; Millner, 2013). As Dawney (2013:43) argues, invoking the 'figure' makes possible an interpretive move away from fixed categories such as body and subject, towards 'a way of conceptualizing the affective capacities that are held by figures that are both material and symbolic, that are produced by and produce the social'. The figure is 'part of a distributed set of relations and is constituted through affective forces that bring it to visibility' (Dawney, 2013:43). Moreover, figures mobilize and draw their authority from specific spatialities and temporalities.

In what follows, I examine four material-semiotic figures which struggles for the temporal commons have mobilized and drawn authority from. We start with a discussion of the 'temporal commons', describing some ways in which we might consider the future to be something that is being enclosed, privatised or individualised, and identifying practices that 'occupy' futures that are collective, shared, and hopeful. I move on to analyse four material-semiotic figures of the temporal commons: foreclosure; obduracy; prefiguration; and future generations. Figures of futurity that attempt to represent future generations in present political bodies, I argue, risk rendering future 'others' contemporary and co-present, and thereby performatively enact a future that is largely congruent with the present. Instead, the most powerful forms of figures of futurity make palpable modes of futurity that are radically distant and other: modes of 'time without me'.

Foreclosing on the Temporal Commons
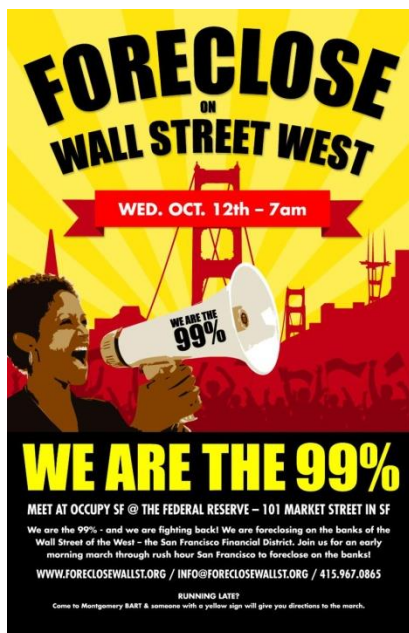
In the opening paragraph of Occupy Wall Street's description of the movement, they state that their aim is 'to fight back against the richest 1% of people that are writing the rules of an unfair global economy that is *foreclosing on our future'* (Occupy Wall Street, 2015, emphasis added). Echoing this theme of foreclosure, on January 20, 2012, several thousand residents of the San Francisco Bay Area occupied the financial district as part of the Occupy Wall Street West actions, demanding that banks put an end to a wave of predatory evictions and foreclosures (Figure 2). Protestors targeted banks and corporations, and disrupted the auction of foreclosed homes. They also occupied Citicorp's main office, staging a mock foreclosure,

piling furniture and moving boxes into the revolving door at the main entrance. In the same way as the movement re-appropriated the meaning of 'occupation' away from its military and authoritarian connotations to one of liberation and sharing (Vasudevan, 2014). The Foreclose on Wall Street protests challenged the redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich that the foreclosures enacted, and insisted that it was the banks themselves that had reneged on their promises and social liabilities. A great debt was owed by the banks to the people, not the other way round. The Foreclose on Wall Street protests aimed to literally discredit the banks and to call in the social debts owed by the banking sector to the '99%'. In doing so, they deployed an aesthetic figure of foreclosure that challenged the temporal logic through which ordinary people's futures could be happily destroyed in order to maintain temporal stability (business as usual) in the banking sector. Foreclose on Wall Street, then, challenged the temporal logic of financial capitalism, insisting on the debt owed by the '1%' to the '99%'. In doing so, the protestors raised the prospect of creating forms of temporal commons, where futures are not privatised or owned by banks, but are co-operatively produced and fairly distributed.

The 'commons' refers to forms of human solidarity based on an ethos of sharing, cooperation, and generosity, in opposition to individual egotism (see Introduction, this volume). Peter Linebaugh (2014) draws a helpful distinction between the commons (which stands in opposition to individualism) and the public (which stands in opposition to the private). In its classic historical formulation, the commons refers to the land shared by peasants to grow crops and raise animals, until such common fields were privatised and enclosed with hedgerows by landowners, with the legal sanction of the state. While struggles over common land remain widespread, the 'commons' now refers to a much wider range of tangible and intangible goods, resources and spaces. Practices of everyday commoning (Bresnihan & Byrne, 2014) create forms of egalitarian sociality that may be 'anti (against), despite (in) and post (beyond) capitalist' (Chatterton et al., 2012). Practices of commoning, however, are not imposed by hierarchical state bureaucracies, but require the active, unalienated participation of the commoners.

Political languages of the commons are saturated with spatial vocabularies. Dominant imaginaries of the commons, I would suggest, still remain tied to ideas of common land, physical enclosure, and spatial occupation. If we are to pay due service to the fundamental geographical insight that spatial relations are inseparable from temporal relations, however, it

is necessary to develop a fuller account of the temporal registers of a spatial politics of the commons (see de Angelis, 2007). Indeed, here I wish to argue, extending the arguments of Bluedorn & Waller (2006), for the need to include a full recognition of the *temporal* commons in wider struggles for the commons. Such temporal commons demand a political and aesthetic vocabulary that extends beyond (orthodox readings of) concepts of '*en*closure' towards a vocabulary of temporal *fore*closure that challenges the ways in which dominant regimes of capital are privatising and individualising time, and not just space.

According to Bluedorn & Waller, the 'temporal commons' can be characterized as 'the shared conceptualisation of time and the set of resultant values, beliefs, and behaviours regarding time, as created and applied by members of a culture-carrying collectivity' (2006:357). Time, they suggest, is a crucial aspect of the 'intangible commons'. However, the temporal commons are being enclosed through logics of efficiency that replace collective, shared time with privatised, individualised, and commodified time. One of the fundamental mechanisms through which the temporal commons are foreclosed is through the market's privatisation of time (making all time available for transactions; valuing time only for its transaction potential; ignoring the *quality* of time). As Bluedorn & Waller perceptively observe, this form of enclosure has received less vigorous contestation than enclosures of more spatially defined commons.

This theory of the temporal commons, however, needs to be extended to recognise the ways in which the temporal commons, far from being inherently immaterial, are also a *material* aspect of social life. To presuppose that time is essentially immaterial (and thus, implicitly, that space is inherently material), is to reproduce a highly problematic privileging of time over space in social theory (see Massey, 2006). Rather, time is produced, just like space, as the effect of specific material practices. This is one reason why, unlike the immaterial commons, time is often governed by a logic of scarcity. Time is constantly reproduced through material spatial practices (May & Thrift, 2001). The temporal commons should not be limited to a 'shared conceptualisation of time', as if time in and of itself had no substantial reality, but should be seen as an essential component of all commons. The temporal commons, therefore, would be better characterized as the product of multiple, heterogeneous practices of time and the resultant values, beliefs, and affective experiences of time.

Several ways in which the temporal commons have been foreclosed through privatisation and individualisation can be remarked upon (Stavrides, 2013; Lejano & Ericson, 2005). The disciplinary privatisation of time perfected by the nineteenth century factory, for example, is perhaps the most often discussed example of the commodification of temporal relations (Thompson, 1967). This functions through the imposition of forms of 'clock time' that divided time into easily quantifiable (and hence marketable) units of measure: a logic that has achieved its most ludicrous example in the forms of 'high-frequency trading' where reductions of time delays of thousandths of a second in flows of information become worth billions of dollars. Whilst the very rich history of time keeping cannot be reduced to a single narrative of the modern imposition of clock time (see Glennie & Thrift, 2009), nevertheless the disciplinary ordering and regulating of time in spaces such as factories, barracks, hospitals and work houses was an important feature of the foreclosure of the temporal commons in industrial modernity. Thus political struggles over time in the nineteenth century were usually focused on reducing the length of the working day, as well as on raising the minimum age of child labour. As these struggles achieved partial success, and a middle class emerged with significant periods of leisure time at weekends, holiday periods, and at the end of the working day, leisure time was also increasingly commodified.

A powerful poster of the Occupy movement gestures towards this kind of foreclosure of the temporal commons (Figure 2). A golden Sun rises over a crowd of Occupy Wall Street protestors. This Sun rises into two blank, angular spaces. Visible underneath it are the smudged outlines of a clock. A figure of solar abundance eclipses the disciplinary strictures of clock time, and washes the crowd below with a golden glow. The image heralds a new occupation of time itself. 'Whose time?', the poster asks. 'Our time. May 1 Rising'. The poster implies that 'our time' is not the commodified temporality of clock time. Rather, it is a time that is shared and practiced communally, and stands in abundance rather than scarcity. Here, time is not subjected to calculation, but is celebrated in its potentiality, warmth, and plenitude.

A different kind of foreclosure of the temporal commons, however, can be discerned in Gilles Deleuze's diagnosis of the 'control society'. In this celebrated essay, Deleuze argues that contemporary societies are experiencing a rather different kind of privatisation of time. Whereas forms of disciplinary power in the 18th and 19th centuries initiated the 'organisation of vast spaces of enclosure', the control societies of the present operate within a different kind of temporality. 'In the disciplinary societies one was always starting again (from school to the barracks, from the barracks to the factory), while in the societies of control one is never finished with anything' (Deleuze, 1992). These different modes of power presuppose different temporalities of justice and judgment: on the one hand, 'apparent acquittal' (between two incarcerations); on the other, 'limitless postponements' where judgment is always 'to come'. In control societies, time is not so much enclosed as it is controlled as an *open* system which, by continually postponing judgment, leaves people subject to continual regimes of evaluation, quality control, retraining, competition, and re-evaluation. This occupation of time effaces distinctions between work and leisure time, and occupies the future indefinitely, via an infinite deferral of judgement and justice.

For the Occupy movement, the way in which this control of the temporal commons has resonated most strongly is in relation to debt. As levels of household debt rise to historic highs, subjects tie themselves to strict temporal regimes of repayment and financial behaviour. As debts are privatised, outsourced, and speculated on, new forms of control

become possible. Subjects are disciplined into regular calendrics of repayment (Guyer, 2007; Lazzarato, 2012), or, increasingly, debt itself becomes mobile and deferrable, controllable through identifying possibilities rather than calculating probabilities (Atkins, 2014; Amoore, 2013). Projected future profits, meanwhile, become a key source of wealth in the present.

For movements such as Strike Debt (an offshoot of Occupy), debt is a means of keeping people 'isolated, ashamed, and afraid'. 'Debt is a tie that binds the 99%. With stagnant wages, systemic unemployment, and public service cuts, we are forced to go into debt for the basic things in life — and thus surrender our futures to the banks … We want an economy in which our debts are to our friends, families, and communities — and not to the 1%' (StrikeDebt, 2015). A poster for Strike Debt (Figure 3) shows a tiny figure in a vast, empty, homogeneous space. The figure is entirely isolated, hunched over in anxiety. The image dramatizes the ways in which debt acts as a form of futurity that is individualised, privatised, and isolated. On the horizon, however, a Sun is once again visible, a dawn beginning to break over the desolate night. 'You are not a loan', the poster declares. Again, solar generosity stands on the brink of overturning the night of isolating futures of indebtedness.
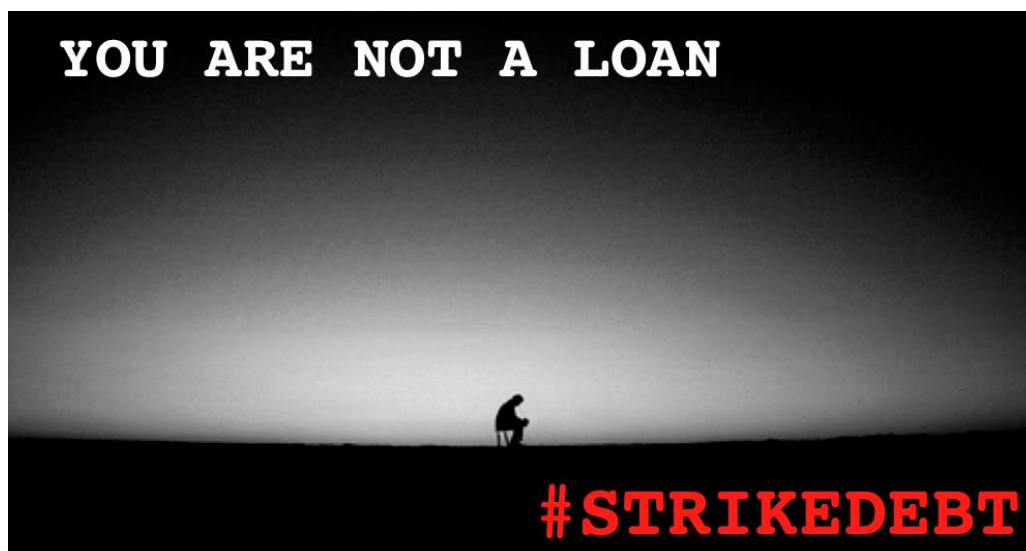
Finally, we can also point to the ways in which the growing awareness of climate change, ecosystem destruction, and mass species extinction are leading to a collective sense of foreboding concerning the nature of the world that we bequeath to the future. This results in futures that are foreclosed on in the most extreme sense, threatening not just devalued futures but *destroyed* futures: futures that contain only an ongoing repetition of violence, destruction,

extinction, and the uneven geographies of climate injustice. Such ecological destruction can be viewed as a foreclosure of the future in the sense that it risks irreparably damaging the future for future inhabitants of the Earth. Such foreclosure is a direct consequence of the dramatic expansion of the capitalist economy over the last two hundred years, and its cycle of accelerating consumption, pollution and destruction of resources, life, and beauty. This kind of privatisation of the future also has the effect of rendering the present spectral and monstrous. The unimaginably vast timescales of geological time, with which we are increasingly confronted in our day to day lives, cannot be apprehended, and slip in and out of consciousness and visibility (Morton, 2013).

A number of other ways in which time is being commodified, privatised and individualised could be described here. The key point is that the temporal commons – forms of shared, collectively produced temporalities – are being individualised, privatised and commodified. New ways of commoning time need to be – and *are* being – invented. Spaces of alternative trading such as 'time banks' or 'time currencies', for example, contest the reduction of time to measures of financial value (see Hughes, 2005). Time banks are community currencies which reward an hour of community volunteering with one credit of a time-based local currency. Members use earned time credits to purchase services from the scheme. Such schemes aim to redefine the socially excluded as providers of useful services, rather than passive recipients of help (Seyfang, 2003). They are based on a principle of sharing and valuing time equally, in contrast to the dominant system that renders some people's time extremely valuable and other people's time 'worthless'. If in practice time banking has been observed to suffer from imbalances of power and participation between the skilled and unskilled, with professional members of these initiatives withholding their skills in fear of losing income (Lee et al., 2004), nevertheless time banks aim in principle for systems of co-operation, sharing and mutual support that achieve a certain degree of distance from the capitalist economy.

In the struggles for the temporal commons associated with the Occupy movement, however, we see a practice of temporal communing that moves beyond logics of equivalences and exchange, towards an ethics of generosity and abundance.

Occupying Time

The diverse movements fighting for the temporal commons are creating a powerful living archive of future-oriented practices. Here I wish to highlight two more key material-semiotic figures of the temporal commons, before going on to consider in more detail the distinctive role of the figure of 'future generations'.

First, a key way of challenging the temporalities of enclosure and privatisation has been through experimenting with different speeds of social practice. In resonance with practices such as the 'slow' movement (see Sharma, 2014), perhaps the most visible of these has been the Occupy movement's dramatization of *obduracy* (i.e. stubborn persistence through time). In contrast with the conventional repertoire of protests and marches that take place over a short period of time and are soon forgotten (of which the vast and largely ineffective 2003 worldwide protests against the Iraq war were perhaps the nadir), the Occupy camps filled public spaces (and created new ones) with the aim of persisting for as long as possible, resisting the neo-liberal temporalities of continual flux and speed and insisting on the right to persist in the creation of new worlds. Judith Butler has linked this obduracy to the authority of physical bodies themselves, with the Occupy camps 'enacting the demands of the people through the gathering together of bodies in a relentlessly public, obdurate, persisting, activist struggle that seeks to break and remake our political world' (Butler, 2011b). Bodies on the street, by occupying space, repeating that occupation, and persisting in that occupation, pose the challenge to privatisation and enclosure in corporeal terms. The persistence of the body calls the legitimacy of the state into question, 'and does so precisely through a performativity of the body that crosses language without ever quite reducing to language ... Where the legitimacy of the state is brought into question precisely by that way of appearing in public, the body itself exercises a right that is no right; in other words, it exercises a right that is being actively contested and destroyed by military force, and which, in its resistance to force, articulates its persistence, and its right to persistence' (Butler, 2011a). This obduracy has also created a remarkable space in which there is time for extensive political debate, discussion, and experimentation with new social architectures. Through obduracy and persistence in the face of hardship, violence, and imprisonment, a space is created in which time can be socialized and shared.

Second, the temporalities of 'prefigurative' politics have been central to the politics of Occupy and related anarchist movements. This emphasis on prefiguration can be seen as a response to a further mode of foreclosing the future, in which contemporary political culture

struggles to articulate alternatives to contemporary structures of power. Frederic Jameson, for example, has long been describing the 'impossibility' of imagining the future in contemporary societies. As 'prisoners' of cultural and ideological enclosure, he argues, we are unable to grasp the social totality in which we are embedded, and thus unable to imagine or project beyond it (Jameson, 1982). Utopianism no longer makes designs on the future (and risk colonising its openness and otherness) but looks for the heterogeneity, diversity and differences at work in the present moment, carving out spaces of alterity at work in the social world. Reticence towards closing down the future with totalizing utopian projects risks leading to a different kind of privatisation of time. This form of enclosure is manifested in an inability to imagine social alternatives to a present that seems unassailable, which means that the future becomes individualised, imaginable only in relation to individual goals rather than wider social transformation. This again gives the present a spectral quality. As the experiential *depth* or 'four-dimensional' quality of time recedes, the present becomes increasingly unreal. It is inhabited by ghosts, incorporeal manifestations of barely remembered pasts and absent, empty futures, and monsters, such as the 'vampire squid' that became a widespread motif in the aesthetics of Occupy.

Occupy's response to this has been to articulate prefigurative politics that live out forms of organisation and social relationships that reflect the future society they seek to create, actively creating a new society in the shell of the old (Ince, 2012; Springer, 2013:408). The notion of prefigurative politics signifies 'the idea that the struggle for a different society must create that society through its forms of struggle' (Holloway 2010:45). Prefiguration refers to 'a political action, practice, movement, moment or development in which certain political ideals are experimentally actualised in the "here and now", rather than hoped to be realised in a distant future. Thus, in prefigurative practices, the means applied are deemed to embody or "mirror" the ends one strives to realise' (van de Sande, 2013: 230). Prefiguration implies a folding of the future into the present, evading means/end distinctions and living alternative futures in the present through experimental forms of social practice and political organisation. Prefiguration involves the demand actively to 'be the change you want to see'(Figure 5), experimenting with new forms of living, organising, building and thinking in doing so.

Representing Future Generations

Another notable feature of struggles over the temporal commons has been the frequency with which figures of 'future generations' are mobilized in order to combat the foreclosure of the future through the destruction of the environmental commons. Occupy London, for example, demanded the creation of a 'positive, sustainable economic system that benefits present and future generations'[i], a gesture that has been echoed across many different Occupy movements. Moreover, as the large-scale planetary issues raised by the concern over the environmental commons, and as the ever expanding temporal registers of social action become ever more pressing, there has been a growing wider interest in asserting the claims of future generations upon the commons. The 2003 Tomales Bay Institute Report on *The State of the Commons*, for example, argues that 'the commons' embraces 'all the creations of nature and society that we inherit jointly and freely, and hold in trust for future generations'. The commons thus encompasses, it argues, future common assets, common property, and common wealth. Building on this definition of the commons as something that can be claimed by future generations, the Climate Legacy Initiative report written by commons activists and researchers at the Vermont Law School makes a number of legislative, regulatory and judicial proposals. Recommendations include implementing environmental rights for future generations; passing Acts to define the environmental legacy that should be left to future generations; establishing offices of 'legal guardians' to act on

behalf of future generations; and the United Nations adopting a declaration formally recognizing the atmosphere as a global 'commons' shared by present and future generations.

Campaigns such as these make strong cases for protecting the future as a commons through legal frameworks, recognising that the law has historically been the most powerful tool for protecting various forms of commons. In doing so, they raise the question of inter-generational justice: the extent to which unborn lives can make claims upon the living. In addressing this, there has been a growing chorus of calls for future generations to achieve some form of representation within formal political spheres. The UK's Alliance for Future Generations, for example, argues that 'Our civilisation has developed to the point where our actions impact not just other people and our local environment, but the whole planet and the conditions of life for centuries to come … We stand to leave to future generations an impoverished common inheritance… Our democracy has not yet caught up with the opening of our eyes to our global and long-term reach – we have not yet extended the vote to future generations'. Similarly, Earth Manifesto propose a Bill of Rights for Future Generations, arguing that: 'The most severely under-represented interests in our political system are young people under the age of 18, because they cannot vote, and every person to be born in the future … [A] new Bill of Rights must be designed to ensure that future generations have reasonable prospects for freedom, dignity, prosperity, financial stability and survival … Congress and nations worldwide should "pay forward" some good deeds to improve the prospects for our children and their descendants' (Earth Manifesto, 2015).

This way of figuring the temporal commons aligns with other figures of the temporal commons by articulating an ethos of generosity that rejects the logic of austerity and 'pays forward' to the future, imagining time in terms of a plenitude and abundance that is made possible by a radical redistribution of wealth away from the '1%' in the present. Where it diverges from the earlier figures, however, is in assuming that it is possible to 'represent' the needs, wishes and desires of the future in the present. Moves to give future generations formal representation in present-day political bodies, through offices such as the 'ombudspersons' for future generations (or similar bodies) in Wales, Hungary, and Finland, stand in danger of entering into a performative contradiction. By assuming that it is possible to speak 'for' future generations, there is a risk of assuming that the future will look similar to the present: that the future is knowable and calculable. Yet this precludes both the possibility of a drastically altered future, whether one in which catastrophic climate change, extinction

or war have transformed the world and the people within it, or one in which radical political transformation has interrupted the world from its present course. By using the representation of future generations as way of calling for change (and averting undesirable change), it seems to implicitly assume a model where the future does *not* radically change. It performs the stability that it aims to undermine.

A 2014 advertisement for Seventh Generation, a US company that makes more sustainable diapers and cleaning products and campaigns for a 'toxin-free generation', encapsulates the ways in which drawing on the authority of future generations risks falling into a problematic hetero-normative domestication of future's alterity or 'otherness'. The narrative of the advert, which is presented as an animation, involves a mother writing a letter to her young daughter, to be opened on the day in the future when the daughter gives birth to her own child. As she writes the letter, her daughter is caring for a teddy bear in its bed. 'You're going to be a great parent, Katy. I can already tell', the mother writes, before giving advice about trusting her instincts, and mentioning her worries about toxic chemicals in the home. The advert ends with a message that, 'As parents, there's only so much we can do to protect future generations', and asking us (the 'we' that it includes the viewer within) to join the campaign against toxic chemicals. The advert invokes a highly normalized, sentimental temporality of organic, gradual process based on female heterosexual reproductivity, or what Lee Edelman (2004) calls 'reproductive futurism'. It presupposes an intensely gendered and hetero-normative vision of the future, one that combines pessimism about radical change ('there's only so much we can do') with an optimism in the power of forms of alternative consumption, which do not challenge wider social norms, to make small changes. Future generations are assumed to be those *closest* to us (the viewer's own children's children); they are made knowable, calculable, and easily assimilated into contemporary norms. 'Future generations' are invoked to make the future familiar and unthreatening. Care for the future is reduced to an individualised, privatised sense of care for one's own family.

An ethic of generosity and hospitality to the future, I am arguing, requires thinking future lives as *distant* others, not as familiar people who have an organic reproductive relation with oneself. Intergenerational justice – just like spatial justice (see Soja, 2010) – has to be extended to distant others, not simply those closest to 'us'. To be clear, my making this argument I am not suggesting that invoking future generations as a source of authority for political claims is necessarily invalid. Rather, I am arguing that the fight for the temporal commons can be conducted in the present through generosity on behalf of a future that is unknown, mysterious, and strange, rather than by domesticating the future by purportedly giving it a voice – a voice that given its unaccountability can only fail to gain genuine legitimacy and authority in the public realm.

Generous Futures

The four figures of futurity that this essay has identified as playing an important role in struggles for the temporal commons – foreclosure, obduracy, prefiguration, and future generations – all share a commitment to countering the 'enclosure' of the temporal commons, whereby time is individualised, privatised and commodified, by practising a politics of generosity towards the future, leaving a positive 'legacy' for those who inhabit the world after us. Such an ethos of generosity is based on a particular approach to the temporality of *justice* as something that cannot be reduced to practices of calculation or equivalence. Nigel Clarke (2013) draws on Georges Bataille's philosophy of solar abundance to articulate forms

of ecological justice that are beyond measure, and are based on an excess that animates a sense of justice that is not entrenched within logics of scarcity and calculable harms. Ecological justice, he argues, must be able to respond to events that are so singular they cannot be encompassed within logics of simple causality or provable culpability.

Such a sense of justice needs to be extended to conceptions of inter-generational justice that concern themselves with justice between living and unborn lives. The widespread arguments over the legitimacy of forms of future 'discounting', for example (where in cost-benefit policy analyses, future lives are given a lower cost than present lives), reduces the future to a logic of calculation which ignores the extent to which a radically unknowable future contains possible events that exceed any measure. Practising the future as a form of commons requires passing on the future as a gift (Kirwan, 2013), through an ethic of generosity to *distant* others, not to future lives rendered virtually the same as the present (Derrida, 2006; Barnett, 2005). Intimations of this ethos towards the temporal commons are visible in the figures of solar abundance, persistent struggle and processual utopianism that offer struggles for the temporal commons potent sources of power.

In Walt Whitman's 'By Blue Ontario's Shore', he attributes to the poet a talent of judging 'not as the judge judges but as the sun falling around a helpless thing'. The poet judges as falling sunlight. For Jane Bennett, this solar judgement entails two attributes. First, it requires magnanimity, an ability to be as accepting of the things he encounters as Nature is of him. Second, it requires far-sightedness, an ability to see an eternity of fibres stretched out over time: a landscape 'of pulsating threads in a lively field of becoming, always interacting, durational threads' (Bennett, 2011). Practising and protecting the temporal commons, I would argue, demands the invention of forms of intergenerational justice that are based on such solar generosity and far-sightedness.

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