Thinking with heritage: past and present in lived futures

Introduction

Some form of engaging with the past is a necessary step in producing futures. This paper suggests that futures created with a particular perspective towards the past will be richer, offer more scope for participatory approaches, and be less at risk of being instrumentalised as means rather than ends. It claims that heritage, rather than history, provides this particular perspective, and that working with the heritages of different groups and sites offers a practical way of connecting with the kind of context and embeddedness that are preconditions of seeing these benefits. For futures practitioners and researchers engaged in futures work that seeks to embed itself within communities and recognise what is cared about within these communities, I suggest here that engaging with the past through heritage and the work of heritage scholars will be a valuable step towards the production of 'future presents' over 'present futures'.

The paper makes this argument in a series of stages. First, I note the connections previous researchers have made between futures studies and history. I go on to describe a critique of one form of historicity, connecting the 'empty time' underpinning this kind of historical thinking with the instrumental futures that sustain society's focus on economic goals over more sustainable alternatives. I draw primarily on Adam and Groves' (2007) notion of 'lived futures', alongside complementary concepts developed within the field of futures, to develop an alternative approach to thinking about futures that emphasises their origins within particular and specific groups and settings. The last part of the paper connects this perspective on 'lived futures' with key aspects of the 'ahistorical thinking' emerging from the earlier critique of historicity, and suggests that this way of thinking about time is found within heritage. I conclude with a brief exploration of the practical ways in which heritage might play a role in projects that address lived futures, proposing that, for futures research, thinking with heritage presents a practical way of embedding enquiry within lived experiences and values.

History and futures

It is commonly understood, within mainstream futures and foresight practice, that history benefits and strengthens futures work, as illustrated in the aphorism, "To look into the future we must look back twice as far" (Saffo, 2007). Historical circumstances set the conditions under which future circumstances develop. The actions of slow-moving drivers of change can only be understood by considering the historical evidence. Some understanding of history is necessary in building an understanding of the future.

Historians are beginning to explore periods in which ideas of the future and planning play a more visible role in public life, particularly as they turn towards the study of time as a socially-constructed product (e.g., Andersson & Keizer, 2014; O'Hara, 2015; Seefried, 2015), though this work does not engage directly with futures research. Some researchers, however, have suggested that there is great deal of continuity between historical scholarship and futures studies. Bradfield *et al.* (2016) discuss the importance of using history to understand how things have to come to be as they are, in order to be able to recognise that the present and future are similar, but, importantly, not identical, to the past. They make a case for using history in futures work as an 'orientation' (Bradfield *et al.*, 2016, p. 57). Green (2012) describes the foundational stances the disciplines have in common, such as an appetite for employing counterfactual reasoning, and a commitment to challenging deterministic thinking: her suggestion that 'thinking with history' might be useful for futurists, employing the habits of mind developed by historians in order to produce futures that are more sensitive to the challenges of discussing time beyond the present, is a valuable one, as is her recognition of the natural interest in both past and future that arises once policy decisions are situated in a temporal flow. Staley (2007), makes a similar argument for the epistemological similarities between historiography and futures work, as does Briggs (1978) when detailing the common ground between history and what he called 'futurology': understanding causation as produced through complex inter-related networks and structures, rather than linear cause and effect; being situated in the present and so reflecting the concerns of the time in their analyses; investigating not one but a range of pasts and futures; recognising the contingent nature of facts; and needing to move beyond extrapolation and prediction to engage with the unknown ("the 'otherness' of both past and future needs to be felt" - Briggs, 1978, p. 450). Given the connections outlined earlier between historiography and futures, and the similar habits of mind valued within each discipline, it is clear that thinking with history can be useful for futurists, in the way that Green (2012), Bradfield *et al.* (2016), and others suggest.

Wagar goes further, suggesting that futures work ought more properly be understood as a sub-field of history: "all futures research is really nothing more than applied history, since

every scrap of hard data processed by futurists - no matter which methods they employ - derives from investigations of past phenomena" (Wagar, 1993, p. 453). Wagar mourns the falling from favour of what he terms 'metahistories', grand accounts of "all of life—governance, politics, commerce, industry, environment, education, families, races, genders, classes, arts and letters, thought and belief, and still more" (p. 453) that adopt "a perspective external to author, text or reader from which it is possible to glimpse the general purpose and direction of historical life." (p. 449). He may have had in mind the histories of civilisations produced by Spengler, Toynbee, Braudel and those that followed (see Kumar, 2014, for an overview of 'civilisational' perspectives) whose work adopts just this universal approach, taking the figure of historian out of time and treating civilisations as the most appropriate units of analysis (Irwin, 1997; Joll, 1985). It addressed, too, the question of the future: for Spengler, civilisation as a necessary final destination for cultures; for Toynbee, the capacity of human will to shape the patterns of civilisational rise and fall; for Braudel, the hard-to-discern context that reveals the crucial problems of the present (Braudel, 1994, p. xxxviii). Braudel's emphasis on the underlying continuities to be found within the *longue durée* complement the 'world-system' approaches associated with Wallerstein (1974), while the cycles and waves of economic development he describes in *Civilisation and Capitalism* (e.g., Braudel, 1992) echo the earlier work of the economist Kondratieev, whose work is often drawn on within future studies (e.g Wilenius, 2015)

Within futures studies, this appetite for universal narratives is echoed in Patomäki and Steger's (2010) description of how the 'Big History' of David Christian (1991) might shift social imaginaries away from a national scope and towards a global one: they celebrate early 'macrohistories' that tell stories of the world (Patomäki & Steger, 2010, p. 1060), but note a tendency for authors of such histories, despite their world-system scope, to tell their stories from within a national or regional frame, in which colonial or imperial power-relations are normalised. When national imaginaries are mistaken for a universal view, Eurocentric and colonial histories result (though this error was one both Toynbee and Braudel sought to avoid).

Instead, suggest Patomäki and Steger, historians ought to imagine humanity not originating from within nations but from within nature, and tell their stories on a scale that allows humanity to be situated properly within a global and cosmic frame. Bussey *et al.* (2012) similarly make use of Christian's 'Big History' to situate actors within a complex set of interacting domains, in order to reframe the way the present and its possibilities are perceived. Both these uses of history seek to move beyond a Eurocentric, colonising view of the world, while benefiting from the historian's capacity to make connections across all domains of experience. For these authors, too, historical narratives of complexity and change carry more weight than speculative future narratives illustrating the same properties, because history is

based on evidence, however imperfectly known (Bussey et al., 2012, p. 386; Patomäki & Steger, 2010, p. 1061; Wagar, 1993, p. 452). All three, as well, seem to share a preference for what Patomaki and Steger describe as "'grand narratives' within 'world-time' that stretches from the mists of the past towards the hazy horizons of the distant future". (Patomäki & Steger, 2010, p. 1061).

Characteristics of historical thinking

Dirlik (2002) describes the ways in which the discipline of history has recognised its complicity with, and origins within, particular social and political structures of power, understanding the need to recognise multiple histories at global, national, regional, and local levels: this disciplinary reflexivity does not, he suggests, prevent historians from making claims about "past and present realities" in which future possibilities can be perceived (Dirlik, 2002). For historians, this reflexivity has made it possible to talk about a certain kind of thinking about history, one associated with modernity, ideas of progress and national identity, and allied with 'scientific' ways of understanding the world. I want to briefly present some principle features of this form of historical consciousness, not to characterise how contemporary historians think about the past, but as a broad description of one dominant form of historicity (Hodges, 2010; Ranjan, 2017): in doing so, I want to set the scene for the subsequent introduction of alternative ways of thinking about the past.

The two thinkers I draw on here are engaged in different projects, yet share some common elements in their analyses of historical thinking. Nora (1989, pp. 8–9) describes history as a secular, intellectual effort to reconstruct a complete and definitive account of the past, using the scientific method adopted in the nineteenth century: like other sciences, it belongs "to everyone and no-one, hence its claim to authority" (p. 9). Contemporary historicism, for Nora, is exemplified by the excessive production of records, enabled through technological advances that have democratised the production of history: "the demand for history has thus largely overflowed the circle of professional historians" (p. 15). Nandy (1995) similarly describes a "historical worldview" that is the dominant global mode of engaging with the past, the aim of which "is nothing less than to bare the past completely" (p. 47), in accordance with the Enlightenment origins of the practice, origins reflected also in the inability of the historical consciousness to imagine the past in anything but historical terms: "it cannot accept that history can be dealt with from outside history" (p. 50).

There are two particular features of historicism as described here that I want to draw attention to. One is that it works with a particular temporality, one that is external, regular,

linear, and able to order and sequence events: it is what Benjamin (2006) in *On the Concept of History* describes as "homogenous, empty time". The second, again consistent with its roots in modernity, is that an effort is made to remove the subject and their context from historical claims made about the world.

Both Nandy and Nora suggest that the continuity provided by history is undone by the changes in social life that have, from the last quarter of the twentieth century, eroded social structures and increased uncertainty. These changes in social life have been variously described elsewhere: the compression (Harvey, 1990) or distanciation (Giddens, 1990) of space and time enabled by rapid technological development and globalisation (Massey, 1994) and the concomitant rise in uncertainty (Bauman, 2000; Beck, 1992) have promoted the rise of what Nowotny (1994) describes as an "extended present" and reduced the capacity of past experience to act as a guide for individuals and communities (Archer, 2012; Beck, 1992). Central to these changes are the empty time and the removal of the subject that feature in the critique of Nandy and Nora. They play a similar role in critiques of dominant futures thinking, to which I now turn.

Instrumental futures

The section before describes a particular kind of historicity, one that does particular kinds of work in society. Contemporary historians commonly recognise the contingent and provisional nature of knowledge and the mediating role of the historian, and are aware of the pitfalls of scientism (Peterson, 2003) when answering the question of 'what happened?'. Similarly, futures practitioners are familiar with the challenges of working in environments where knowledge is expected to conform to ideas of 'scientific deduction' (see Aligica, 2003, for a deeper exploration). And 'thinking with history' can be useful for futurists, as seen earlier.

But I would like to suggest that thinking with history is not sufficient, and may risk being counterproductive. Working with history as a habit of mind or as a discipline with similar epistemological challenges does not prevent the production of a particular kind of future, one that I suggest is common, and undesirable, and one that the reflexivity and awareness of the discipline of history is not sufficient to guard against. These undesirable futures depend on the principles of empty time and the removal of the subject, the same principles at the heart of the kind of historical thinking critiqued above. Working with these principles makes it easier to produce instrumental futures (Michael, 2000), narratives that work as means towards projecting the unexamined ends of the present forward, offering a limited view of human possibility that forecloses real change. For example, in our current moment these unquestioned

aims are often directed towards ensuring economic growth and the maintenance of a way of living common in the global North, hindering the transition to a sustainable way of living that is better suited to a world changed by a warming climate. Instrumental futures offer multiple routes to the same unconsidered end, when more substantive futures might ask whether there are other ways of living, alternative goals that would comprise a good and flourishing life. Adam and Groves (2007) call futures of the first sort "empty futures", and describe the ways in which they are disconnected from the social relations, norms and systems that give rise to actual future circumstances, in an account that is described more fully below.

This paper is written with the understanding that the best contribution futures work can make to society would be to avoid the further construction of these empty futures, and develop approaches that foster the development of more substantive futures, embedded within and produced through actual social relations, and concerned with the future as an end rather than a means. I suggest that, for futures researchers and practitioners, 'thinking with heritage' — rather than with history — might contribute just such an approach. To elaborate on this suggestion, in the next section I describe some alternative ways of thinking about the future, before connecting them with alternative ways of thinking about the past.

Empty and lived futures

Adam and Groves (Adam, 2010; Adam & Groves, 2007; Groves, 2017) suggest that, within contemporary Western society, one particular way of imagining and representing the future is dominant, an approach that assumes particular characteristics of the future: that it is abstract, open and empty. Predictions of future states are derived from extrapolating from past empirical data, assuming a universe governed by natural laws: these abstractions are projected into a vacant future "belonging to everyone and no-one" (Adam & Groves, 2007, p. 57). The future becomes capable of being colonised. This approach also represents the future as open, that is, not preordained by external forces but produced through human activity directed towards some end. These two aspects of futures, abstract and open, in which predictability and freedom are in tension, are reconciled in the production of 'empty futures', in which abstract futures, made commensurable through quantified measurement, are exchanged for one another, depending on current projections of greatest benefit. Market valuations, projected benefits of technological innovations, claims about the skills needed by future employers: these might all be examples of 'empty futures', shaping investment and decisions in the present, and all capable of being usurped by later claims and projections. These futures are empty of context, of the connections and relations that constitute the particular: they are futures made for, and valued in, the present day, yet unconnected to the present, seen as an abstract possibility rather than a 'now' that is

yet to come. They are a product of the empty time that underpins the critique of historicity discussed earlier.

In contrast to these empty futures, with their mobile and exchangeable natures, what Adam and Grove call 'lived futures' are rooted in ways that make their exchange impossible: they are particular to places and groups and so not portable in the same way. Groves (2017) emphasises that anticipation does not arise simply from the future imaginaries and 'images of the future' examined by futures studies and sociologies of time and expectation, but also from the material and affective aspects that constitute social life, in which these images are embedded. These aspects themselves display anticipatory capabilities, insofar as they afford different possibilities for action that are contingent on models of future circumstance, or suggest, through their design and structuring, certain futures over others. As a result, different futures are available to different parts of the anticipatory environment at different points, each influencing possible futures in other parts of the system in a complex web of interaction. Making sense of the future, then, for those living within these multiple anticipatory systems (that is, all of us) requires considering the relationships between these different past futures and making sense of the past through the futures it made possible: these relationships are complex, "spiral and fractal, rather than linear" (Groves, 2017, p. 35). Understood through the anticipatory frame of the lived future, past, present and future are inseparable, and one possible future cannot be made commensurable with another, in the way that characterises empty futures.

Latent futures and the thick present

The various systems of structures that comprise sociotechnical and natural environments have different possible futures embedded within them, outcomes which are themselves contingent on other precursor outcomes. The workings of these structures, with their generative potential, may be unseen, having not yet produced empirically-observable traces of their action. The futures they contain within them are latent, yet to be actualised, still in the process of becoming. Rather than futures beginning with the evidence available to us for observation, then, futures are already under way by the time traces of their becoming are evident. The actions we take now are constrained by the outcome of past futures, and will constrain and shape future futures. Adam and Groves put it like this: "Instead of conceiving of futures simply as the products of our actions and activities in the present, we have to understand the futures societies create as swelling up within them, always on the way to unfolding." (Adam & Groves, 2007, p. 122). They make use of Spinoza's distinction between *natura naturans*, the process through which reality unfolds, and *natura naturata*, the products

it leaves in the world: latent futures can be thought of as part of this process, while abstract futures are products, disengaged from the continual renewing of the world.

Poli (Poli, 2016) similarly distinguishes between process and product when discussing the futures that are latent within generative structures. His ontology of anticipation also includes the notion of the 'thick present'. Poli observes that, within research concerned with time and the future, the notion of the present as a "durationless interface between past and future" (Poli, 2016, p. 71) is being superseded by an understanding of the present as having duration, with elements of past and future contained within it, so that it has a richness and depth missing from the 'blink-and-you-miss-it' specious present of the psychologists. Thick presents describe what happens together, naming meaningful periods of time: they refer to units of experience that are meaningful to speakers and listeners in particular contexts, acting as single analytic units that can be used to anchor discussion or reflection. If the idea of a 'thick present' seems counter-intuitive or paradoxical, the contrary notion—an instantaneous present that is all we can know but which we can never observe—comes with its own paradoxes (some of which are explored by Power, 2012). The value of the idea of the 'thick present' to the current discussion lies in the support it lends to thinking about latent futures: it gives them somewhere to happen in. Or at least, thinking about latent futures requires that the present be considered to have sufficient extension for the action of underlying structures of reality to be recognised. Other authors have reached for similar ways of thickening the present, from Adam and Groves' notion of 'futures-in-the-making' (Adam & Groves, 2007) to Elise Boulding's 'extended present', encompassing the generations above and below this one whose members have had physical contact (Boulding, 1990, p. 1.) Lived futures, it is clear, take place in a thick present, one in which social, natural, technological structures have room to unfold.

There is, for Adam and Groves (2007), a fundamental ethical implication that arises from these ontological positions: the centrality of the idea of care for the future. This idea is not, of course, unique to their work. For example, the wide literature on intergenerational and environmental ethics advances a variety of legal, rights-based or consequentialist arguments for taking future generations into account when making decisions in the present. Within futures studies, the idea that people alive in the present have a moral or ethical imperative to consider the future inhabitants of earth is a central motivation for many researchers, who suggest that future generations need us to care about their wellbeing and interests. There are a range of arguments commonly advanced: that the 'human project' of 'civilisation' is not yet finished; that we are culpable for some of the harm future generations will experience; that not caring, or privileging a short-term self-interest, are both selfish attitudes that diminish us; that we have a duty of stewardship of both the planet and what makes us human, the knowledge and culture that defines us (Tonn, 2018; Slaughter, 1994; Tough, 1993). Insofar as these arguments are

based in an understanding that our lives are bound up in social relations, and these relations extend into past and future (Slaughter, 1994), and to the extent that they are concerned with the nature of what we "bequeath" to future generations (Tonn, 2018, p. 48), these arguments for caring for the future cohere with the argument I explore here. But they frame care for the future, or for 'future generations', in a way that makes it harder to connect with existing heritage and the past. The arguments are instrumental, made in terms of individual interests. In contrast, what I want to focus on is the way that care necessarily arises from the fundamentally social nature of people and our agency (going further than Slaughter, who still locates care within the individual actor), since I think a similar kind of care is involved in valuing or recognising heritage. To do this, in this paper I will look to Adam and Groves' particular account of care for the future, which they use to distinguish between futures made with care for their inhabitants and futures that lack this attention, building on this understanding of people as situated within past, present and future relations.

Adam and Groves borrow from Heidegger and Jonas to suggest that, as beings embedded within constantly unfolding networks of generative structures and processes, our existence is fundamentally and continually anticipatory (see also Poli, 2010, Louie (2010)), being concerned with what actions we may take to further our projects and interests. We live surrounded within a perpetually shifting horizon of our latent potential. This futurity is an inescapable feature of being; the futures that matter to us are lived futures, not abstract, part of what it means to exist. Further, since the networks (social, biological, material, ecological) in which we are embedded are far-reaching and complex, our futures are bound with others, with whom we share some common fate. Our primary relation to the future, then, is one of care, in which we pay attention to what shared futures might emerge, and strive to fulfil this latent potential, "to accompany the *desired* future potential of the living present to its full realisation in an awaited future present" (Adam & Groves, 2007, p. 140). Care, for Adam and Groves, is ineluctably bound up with the future orientation that is a necessary feature of our existing within particular networks of generative structures.

Futures and care

The ethical stance that attends this understanding of care and its part in lived futures differs in some important respects from the traditional liberal stances found in European societies, which emphasise autonomy and liability as aspects of responsibility. Growing up in social contexts introduces us to the ideas that there are some actions worth taking for their own sake, such as tending to the needs of people important to us (Adam & Groves, 2007, p. 151). Social relationships demand that we sometimes demonstrate a kind of moral initiative, taking

responsibility for the provision of care to others. This responsibility is not reciprocal: it is not, for example, a mutual responsibility to refrain from certain behaviours, but a responsibility that falls on us to the extent that its object matters to us: this mattering is the motivation for taking responsibility. The relationships that give rise to this non-reciprocal responsibility are not necessarily equal: a parent takes responsibility for their child, for example, or a teacher for their student by virtue of the meaning the relationship has for them, not in the expectation of some commensurate importance being placed on the relationship by the other. And since these relationships are embedded in networks that encompass other societies and natural systems beyond our immediate space and time, our spheres of responsibility are widened beyond the individual social interactions that are the model for Enlightenment ethical frameworks.

Other people, then, are important to us and the objects of our care because the unfolding of their lives is interwoven with the other processes that constitute our own lives, within which are the latent futures and potential that we wish, through our care, to help bring about. Adam and Groves are clear that these processes include non-human beings, and objects such as "[a]n artwork, a landscape, an institution, an idea" (Adam & Groves, 2007, p. 155). They continue: "In caring for things as diverse as natural habitats, democratic institutions, or the works of Beethoven, we are concerned that they should continue to be sources of meaningfulness for ourselves, others with whom we share the world now, and future others whom we shall never meet." (Adam & Groves, 2007, p. 156). Understanding that the networks in which our lives are embedded span multiple domains—social, biological, environmental, technological—enables us to recognise the different directions in which our responsibilities of care can be extended, beyond the social.

Alternatives ways of thinking about time and the past

The notions of thick presents, latent futures, and lived futures all offer alternative ways of imagining the future that do not depend on removing the subject in an attempt to create universally true futures, or on ideas of empty time, and which are able to recognise relations of care. Similarly, there are alternative ways of relating to the past that do not involve historical thinking, in the terms described above, which are mediated through relations of care, and which likewise imagine time in different ways. Here, I want to briefly characterise these other ways of engaging with the past and to connect them to non-empty approaches to thinking about the future, before going on, in the next section, to relate these ahistorical ways of thinking to current ideas about heritage.

In sketching out these other ways of engaging with the past I am going to return to Nandy (1995) and Nora (1989), who in the accounts they give of historical thinking also describe alternatives. Both Nandy and Nora draw a contrast between historical thinking, as they each understand it, and other modes of knowing the past. For Nora, the distinction is between history and memory: he distinguishes between a knowledge of the past that is embedded in everyday life and practice, requiring no special effort to articulate since it is continually lived, and the rational, analytic historicism described above. There are some particular aspects of his description I want to pay attention to. Memory, as he describes it, is something like the habitus described by Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1990, Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992)), an unseen array of dispositions engendered in each of us through the social contexts in which we live: "true" memory, says Nora, "has taken refuge in gestures and habits, in skills passed down by unspoken traditions, in the body's inherent self-knowledge, in unstudied reflexes and ingrained memories" (Nora, 1989, p. 13). The pasts remembered in this way are particular to places and groups, not public: memory is "blind to all but the group it binds" (Nora, 1989, p. 9), it "takes root in the concrete" (Nora, 1989, p. 9) and "attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events" (Nora, 1989, p. 22). Memory is embedded in the context of lived lives.

Memory is distinct from history beyond simply being particular where history is general. For Nora, it works with a different understanding of time and of the material it makes use of: while history works with empty clock time to record what is past, memory, being lived, is a "perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present". And unlike history, which must recognise and work with all the facts it uncovers, "Memory, insofar as it is affective and magical, only accommodates those facts that suit it; it nourishes recollections that may be out of focus or telescopic, global or detached, particular or symbolic" (Nora, 1989, p. 8). Memory is also, unlike secular and rational history, a way of connecting with the sacred (Nora, 1989, p. 9, p, 14, p. 19).

Nora does not claim that this is how memory works today (in fact, his purpose in developing the idea is to support the claim that contemporary memory is not this 'true' memory, but one perhaps fatally historicised, and that we continually attempt to resuscitate in the face of discontinuity and change). But the alternative he describes resonates with the stances towards the future that are associated with lived futures, as does Nandy's similar account of ahistorical thinking. For Nora, ahistorical thinking works with the 'facts that suit it': for Nandy, it is characterised by a "principled forgetfulness" (Nandy, 1995, p. 47), a necessary quality for the building of myths, which connect the past to "its ethical meaning in the present" (Nandy, 1995, p. 47). Myths, alongside religion and the sacred, are important ways of recognising the past and bringing it into the present, providing, not the "empirical certitude" of history but a "moral certitude", a continuity of values between past and present (Nandy, 1995,

p. 56). This "morality of everyday life" becomes a vital device for decoding other times, through which "all times exist only in present times…[t]here is no past independent of us; there is no future that is not present here and now" (Nandy, 1995, p. 64). Creating the past narratives that guide and shape moral behaviour in the present requires silence and forgetting at times, both anathema to the historicised imagination: these narratives "are primarily responsible to the present and to the future; they are meant neither for the archivist nor for the archaeologist".

Ahistorical thinking, here, is the antithesis of the 'view from nowhere' (Nagel, 1986): it is a view from somewhere, from within the social bonds and relations that construct a thinking, feeling, moral, subject, through whom the past is mediated, and who is able to work with past, present and future in temporalities other than the empty clock time of historicity. But the present-centredness of this subject is not the stunted present of secular modernity, lacking a horizon in Nowotny's "extended present" (1994). Rather, it has more in common with the *Jetztzeit* described by Benjamin (Firth & Robinson, 2014; Jennings & Eiland, 2006), the 'here-and-now' in which connections with other resonant moments are recognised, forming "constellations" across time that are outside the sequenced time of history and capable of interrupting it: in doing so, the subject in the present can perceive the opportunity of redeeming past possibility, in the same way that Benjamin suggests, for the Jews, that "every second was the narrow gate, through which the Messiah could enter". The past, then, is not complete or finished, as in clock time: it appears within the present, in the "here-and-now, in which splinters of messianic time are shot through."

These constellations echo the 'fractal time' Groves (2017) sees working within the memories and futures of the campaigning groups he worked with. Other resonances can be seen between these accounts of ahistorical thinking and the notions of thick present, latent futures, and lived futures described earlier. Both sets of ideas start from a critique of 'homogenous, empty time' and the removal of the subject from the production of time. Both, too, lay emphasis on the way temporal subjects are embedded within particular social and spatial relations. And both pay attention to the ways that theses subjects' moral and affective presents construct their pasts and futures. Adam and Groves (2007) make a distinction between 'present futures' and 'future presents': the first describes narratives of the future constructed to further the interests of actors in the present, while the second describes the real futures that will be experienced as presents. Alongside 'future presents', then, this centering on the temporal subject offers the chance to think about 'past presents'.

For futures practitioners who recognise the need to articulate lived futures, in contrast to the empty futures the field so often produces, this kind of ahistorical thinking is a necessary

alternative to the projective and extrapolatory futures of historical time, because it works through the subjects, the contexts and particular relations with which they are concerned. But relating these abstract ideas to the practical work of recognising and communicating lived futures may be challenging. Heritage, I suggest, offers a practical way of working with ahistorical time. In the next section, I want to show that much of what is described above might be more easily recognised as heritage, and that the field of heritage presents a useful and productive disciplinary frame through which to pay attention to the social relations and contexts that produce the temporal subjects whose lived futures we are concerned with.

Heritage and futures

Heritage is what is passed to the next generation. The mechanisms that enable inheritance and their objects have been different at different times, as has the role played by heritage in private and public life. But, in general, heritage is concerned with steps taken in the present to pass on those aspects of the past that are valued: in the well-worn phrase, heritage is "from the past, in the present, for the future". Heritage, as far as it is a formal social practice of memorialisation, shares the same modernist roots as history and other forms of knowledge production (Holtorf & Fairclough, 2013), and has been the subject of much the same kind of critique as that offered to history and historical thinking, with attention given to the role it plays in the formation of national identities, the heritages of marginalised communities, the groups whose values are most commonly reflected within heritage choices, and so on. My intention in this section is not to précis the history of heritage and heritage studies, but just to distill those aspects of heritage that seem to me most necessarily to reflect the characteristics of ahistorical thinking and lived futures outlined above.

History necessarily has some relationship with the future. But for heritage the future is fundamental, since without an idea of some kind of future the concept of heritage is meaningless. For futures and foresight practitioners, this quality in itself suggests that heritage might offer a distinctive approach towards engaging with the past. Like all social practices, the work undertaken in the present within the field contributes to constructing the eventual future, through setting the context and creating resources for future society. But beyond this, I would suggest that heritage joins a smaller number of specific areas of human activity in representing a conscious, reflexive effort to connect the present to the future (which is not to say that everything inherited was intended or imagined). Others might include education, or law, or urban planning (all fields that may generate forms of heritage, in common with all fields of human activity, but whose aims are distinct from those of heritage).

Despite the central importance of the future for heritage, within the field there have been few attempts to discuss the future beyond general terms: the future of specific objects, or the future of the field, or the invocation of future generations are all commonly discussed, but, in comparison to the field's deep engagement with related fields such as memory or time, there appears to have been little theoretically-oriented work directed towards understanding the nature of the relationship between heritage and the future. A recent exception is the growing body of work led by Holtorf and Harrison (e.g , DeSilvey, 2017; Harrison, 2015, 2016; Harrison *et al.*, 2016; Holtorf & Fairclough, 2013; Holtorf & Kristensen, 2015; Högberg, Holtorf, May, & Wollentz, 2017), who with colleagues offer those working within heritage studies a rich re-casting of heritage primarily in terms of its capacity to make futures, and the need to give processes of change a more central role in how heritage is understood. This work is not connected to other fields of scholarship concerned with the future, such as futures studies or recent sociologies of the future, limiting the ways in which this future-making capacity might be described. It does, however, aim to position heritage as a positive force for change in the face of global challenges: an example of this is offered by recent work on heritage and sustainability, exploring the active role heritage can play in supporting sustainable development (e.g., Barthel-Bouchier, 2016; Cassar, 2009; Howard & Pinder, 2003; Serafi & Fouseki, 2017)

So heritage and the future have an existing relationship, if one whose nature might still be illuminated more fully. In what follows, I want to signal some of the points of connection I see between heritage and the kinds of ahistorical thinking that resonate with the ideas of the thick present and lived futures described earlier. This is not to suggest some kind of identity between ahistorical thinking and heritage, or, conversely, to present them as necessarily distinct, but simply to gesture towards some of the ways in which heritage might offer a practical disciplinary point of contact with the past for futures practitioners concerned with producing and understanding lived futures.

While it responds to the past, heritage is something made in the present, and something that consequently reflects the values of the society in which it is constructed (Harvey, 2001, p. 320; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983). Lowenthal (1998, p. xv) suggests that "[i]n domesticating the past we enlist it for present causes…heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes": at different times this has led to various ways of using heritage, from the Christian repurposing of pagan sites in building Rome as a medieval center of worship, to the promotion of traditional celebrations such as 'Bonfire Night' as a way of cementing English identity, to the preservation focus of the 1882 Monuments Act and, in our reflexive, mobile, and uncertain times, our interest in personal identity and roots (Harvey, 2001). Heritage, then, is a sociocultural product that is necessarily embedded in particular contexts and relations, and so,

rather than being eternal, is historically contingent (Winter, 2013). This embeddedness naturally and necessarily constructs a subject, the recipient of legacies personal and public (Lowenthal, 1998, ch. 2), and the progenitor of future heritage, whose identities and affiliations are in part constructed through heritage, and, crucially, through whom the axiological and affective properties of heritage are established. Heritage becomes heritage for many reasons, but always because some person or group finds some meaning in it. This echoes Nora's understanding of memory as belonging to the "group it binds" (Nora, 1989, p. 9), as embedded within the context of lived lives.

The meanings groups find in the past are articulated, not through historical accounts, but stories that take what is needed from the past to illustrate what is important in the present. These borrowings need not be from periods sequentially related to the present. Harvey (2001) offers some examples: hagiographies of saints's lives connected a medieval present with "a particular past and a particular landscape" (p. 333), while neolithic monuments were used to support eighteenth-century nationalist and anti-Catholic perspectives (p. 334). To frame the stories that the present wants to tell, only certain elements of the past are needed: when heritage "celebrates victory (success, conquest, supremacy) and consecrates loss (defeat, misery, degradation)", it requires the kind of 'principled forgetting' that Nandy describes (Nandy, 1995, p. 47). The subjects through whose interests these pasts are mediated have different purposes and projects that they attempt to sustain through this use of heritage. But in selectively relating pasts to a particular present moment, these exercises all recall the here-and-now of Benjamin, the present-centredness of Nora's memory and Nandy's ahistorical thinking.

The idea of heritage as a process, as something that changes over time, has been more central within recent contributions to heritage studies. Holtorf and Kristensen (2015) suggest that, rather than heritage being seen as something essentially static that comes under external threat, heritage should be understood as perpetually undergoing change, through a combination of natural processes and human activity: loss and destruction are, then, a natural feature of heritage. They suggest further that, as new forms of material and cultural production lead to a profusion of heritage, societies will be pushed to make choices about what to keep, in what form, and what to abandon or jettison, further echoing Nandy's 'principled forgetting'. These themes feature, too, in the work of Harrison and colleagues (e.g., DeSilvey; 2017; Harrison *et al.* 2016; Harrison, 2016; Harrison, 2015), focussing on ways of understanding heritage as unfinished and changeable, a site as much of decay as persistence, characterised by a continual shifting between states of being. Harrison (Harrison, 2015), alongside Holtorf and Fairclough (2013), suggests that these continual changes make it more appropriate to think of heritage objects as processes first, rather than their products. These heritage objects, for Harrison, are embedded within and produced through particular geographic and social relations (recognised

also by Holtorf & Fairclough, 2013), which establish a "regime of care" towards the heritage object and towards the futures it contributes to forming. Heritage practice, for Harrison, necessarily positions the groups involved in a relation of care towards the future. We might re-order the common heritage mantra to reflect this future-mindedness: 'for the future, in the present, from the past'.

The idea of 'latent futures' described above can be used to recognise the futures that may be contained within heritage, as well as the efforts made through heritage practice to preserve future possibilities for heritage objects. Understanding heritages as produced in the present opens the way to thinking of them as produced through the constellations of past and present described by Benjamin, or in the thick present described by Poli, selecting what is needed from the past through 'principled forgetting'. The interactions between past and potential futures and present or future histories that Groves describes taking place within anticipatory environments, where futures are understood through "histories told at various levels" (Groves, 2017, p. 35), can be traced within heritage sites and the conversations around them that construct their significance, imbue them with meaning and establish relations of care towards them. As they adapt, or are adapted, to changing contexts, these sites provide examples and illustrations of the unfolding processes Adam and Groves describe: whether adapting to changing social and economic circumstances, or to larger geophysical processes of erosion and climate change, heritage sites and the practices they sustain are continually producing 'futures-in-the-making', including futures where these heritage sites and objects no longer exist.

Thinking about futures with heritage

Heritage, then, seems a good disciplinary frame through which to pay attention to the social relations and contexts that produce the temporal subjects whose lived futures we are concerned with. My suggestion in this paper is that, for futurists with an interest in understanding or working with lived futures over instrumental futures, this disciplinary frame offers a more consistent approach towards recognising and engaging with the past and its role in producing futures than the disciplinary frame of history. In common with the mainstream of the humanities and social sciences, historians are well aware that history is constructed and contested, that their knowledge is mediated and situated, and that extrapolation and projection have their limits. But this awareness does not mean that history is able to offer the ways of thinking that I highlight in this paper: the subjectivity, the axiology, the fractal temporality that I suggest are core to the 'ahistorical' thinking that is central to heritage and lived futures alike. History, then, is important for futurists. It is insufficient, however, as a means of apprehending the past as a constituent of lived futures. For that, thinking with heritage is necessary.

Thinking with heritage, I have suggested here, offers the opportunity to foreground particular ways of imagining the past that are important for working with lived futures, by paying attention to some underlying ontological ideas that I have argued are common to heritage and lived futures: latent futures, dispositions in the present that may contingently take on an empirical form; thick presents, durations that contain pasts and futures within them (fractal, or thick, or shot through with messainic time), in contrast to unextended and sequential presents; seeing both pasts and futures as unfolding processes, situated within networks of generative structures; and understanding that the construction of pasts and futures through subjects necessarily imbues them with meaning and value.

For futurists, thinking with heritage offers a way of operationalising the abstractions of futures theory, pointing the way to the parts of human experience and social life that futures research needs to take account of in order to recognise and develop the lived futures described above. Heritage pays attention to attachments and practices that are interwoven with landscape and place, offering a signpost to real communities with whom futures researchers might work, and providing a disciplinary platform for making visible alternative priorities and objects of concern that, as Groves (2017, p. 30) describes, become the 'public things' around which the future is problematised. Engaging with the real social contexts in which value and meaning are created, using heritage to locate and place possible futures (Sandford, 2013), offers futures practitioners a way of guarding against the production of instrumental futures. Heritage offers futures work a practical route towards adopting a "view from somewhere".

What this underlines for futures researchers is the importance of participatory and democratic approaches towards futures projects. Building on the early work of researchers such as Jungk and Müllert (1987) and Masini (1993), foresight and futures practice have a long history of developing participatory and inclusive methodologies, from action research, to more ethnographic work with small communities, to large-scale web-based projects, to design fiction and speculative research (e.g., Duggan, Lindley, & McNicol, 2017; Gidley, Fien, Smith, Thomsen, & Smith, 2009; Helm, 2007; Kaltenborn, Thomassen, & Linnell, 2012; Loveridge & Street, 2005; Raford, 2015; Ramos, 2006; Shaw *et al.*, 2009). A central tenet of futures practice is that the participation of people with an interest in the futures under examination makes the final outcomes stronger, and that, conversely, the lack of such participation diminishes their quality. Thinking with heritage would strengthen those approaches, particularly since many such projects start with a concern for what communities and societies value and find meaningful: it holds out the promise of strengthening the outcomes of such research, since by considering the particular heritages of communities involved it grounds the exercise in actual contexts and lived experience. Heritage gives participatory futures some clay to work with, obliging the conversation to face and grapple with circumstances unfolding in real life by

engaging with particular futures, rather than the general, off-the-shelf future imaginaries that might otherwise be the focus of discussion. So, for example, futures workshops could be held in places that are part of participants' heritage, with discussions starting from a recognition of this heritage and the ways in which it features in their lives. Groups might ask what automation might mean for the firms that have always employed their family members, rather than discussing 'the rise of Industry 4.0'; or consider, with teachers and students from their school, what using machine learning to predict Year 6's grades will require and what the benefits might be, rather than discussing 'AI in the classroom'; or begin the work of being reconciled to the loss of the cliff-top church, rather than considering 'climate change impacts on UK coastal settlements'; or recognise the ways in which new arrivals to a community can be welcomed, rather than talking about a 'migration crisis'. All these conversations would be given solidity by reference to the different kinds of heritage produced within that community. And working with this heritage, reflexively given meaning by that community, when developing narratives of possible futures makes it impossible for the authors of those futures not to be visible within them.

Thinking with heritage, then, offers the possibility for futures work of supporting presents that are more resilient and adaptable, not because they are flexible in how they respond to change, but because communities and individuals are better able to articulate futures that are meaningful and worth bringing about. Instead of asking passively, 'what will happen to us? How should we respond?', they can imagine an active engagement with the future: 'what do we need to carry through with us? What do we care about? What should we tend to?'. In this way, futures practice can contribute towards bringing about the positive future presents that are latent today.

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