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Introduction

Memories of the Future is a widely used term for the understanding of future frameworks, propositions, predictions and approaches. Our preliminary discussions about the subject began five years ago. Since then the relevance of these discussions to the current instability and stability of a political and sustainable future have become even more pertinent and prescient than we could have envisaged at the outset. The book charts the contradictory and often complex 'post progressive' discourses in memory and futurity studies. Its twelve chapters are by authors from diverse fields who frame this specialist subject within four parts: 'Part I: Memories of the Future: On Countervision'; 'Part II: Intersections of Memory, Formative Experience and Learned Culture'; 'Part III: The Reconditioning of Time'; and 'Part IV: Future Permissions and Former Horizons'.

The legacy of studies on futurity, futurology and future studies is historically extensive. The term *Memories of the Future*, used in the title of this book is one that has surfaced in many previously researched articles, books, journals, symposia, exhibitions, and public spaces. One key example of this was conceived in the 1960s where the concept of future studies reached a global level and led to the formation of the World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF) in 1973.[1] In this book, which is titled *Memories of the Future: On Countervision*, a returning theme prevails on whether the future is a thing of the past and if memory is now scrambled, reversed and

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[1] The WFSF is a UNESCO and UN consultative partner and global, non-commercial NGO with an executive board of governors and a president. The WSFS makes an important point in considering the emphasis of '"futures" as a plural term rather than a single "future studies" to counter the idea that there is only one future and to open up diverse quantum possibilities' <https://www.wfsf.org/about-us> accessed 12 August 2016.

reconstituted outside of technological and human recognition. Within the specialist fields of: technology, art, design, literature, street ballads, women's studies, time-travel and science-fiction, is the new *future* a *no future*? The chapters do not try to predict or retain a view of the future (or deny its studies), but address the questions that arise from such incompletion, ongoing fascination and overall divergence of what was once the future or what is remembered of the once future.

As declared in the third point of the *#Accelerate: Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics*: 'While crisis gathers force and speed, politics withers and retreats. In this paralysis of the political imaginary, the future has been cancelled.'[2] In an alternative account Robin Wagner-Pacifici focuses on the subject of memory as an event and makes an equally compelling argument when he states that 'scholars of memory should re-identity as scholars of events, and in that order to do so, events themselves (their formation and shapes, their mobility and desuetude, and their longevity) must be reconceptualised'.[3] In relation to the abundant post-future positions available, pivotal concern arises: How is our potential to imagine the future declining? Are we running out of ideas?

At the conference where this book was conceived,[4] the call for papers outlined and shared similar sentiments to those proposed by Franco 'Bifo' Berardi's book, *After the Future*.[5] In editing this book, authors have been selected who reinstate what memories of the future contend with today

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2   <http://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/05/14/accelerate-manifesto-for-an-accel
     erationist-politics/> accessed 14 March 2016. *Accelerate Manifesto* states in support
     of their aims the following words: 'Accelerationism pushes towards a future that
     is more modern, an alternative modernity that neoliberalism is inherently unable
     to generate.'

3   Robin Wagner–Pacifici, 'Reconceptualizing memory as event: from "difficult pasts"
     to "restless events"'. Look in Anna Lisa Tota and Trevor Hagen's (eds) *Routledge
     International Handbook of Memory Studies* (2016): 22–27.

4   *Memories of the Future* began with a conference held in May 2014 at 45 Millbank,
     Chelsea College of Art, University of the Arts, London, and at Centre for Study of
     Cultural Memory, IMLR University of London, Senate House.

5   Franco Berardi (Bifo), *After the Future*, ed. Gary Genosko and Nicholas Thoburn
     (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2011).

through their specialisms and dexterity on the subject. Berardi considers whether the myth of the future is rooted in an exhaustion of modern day capitalism such as the *de-humanizing process provoked by finance capitalism*. The chapters expand on how this is manifest across diverse practices and fields of research. In promoting values and ideologies that continue to endure the rise of neoliberal futures, we begin to harbour an era of corporate deficiency enhanced by depression instead of social progression. Precarious living and working conditions are constantly being normalized at a social and political level and have thus become a fundamental instrument of governing societies. More significantly, these conditions reset the value and the production of art in a neoliberal capitalist future. This book attempts to address (in the spirit of many others) how contemporary practices of memory and future studies counter and question such an accelerated onslaught. How is permission granted for artists, designers and scholars to resist, to withdraw and reclaim their initial rights to the autonomous reproductions attached to these investigations? Numerous communities have summarized the challenges of modern technological, environmental and social changes under the auspices of a corporate world estate. In other words, we continue to consume the erroneously speculated-upon galaxy of elite global finances against invaluable dwindling resources extracted from nature. Gary Genosko and Nicholas Thoburn make a clear reference in their essay's preface to Berardi's point:

> What happens to political thought, practice, and imagination when it loses hold on 'the future'? It goes into crisis. The analytic, psychological, and libidinal structures of 20th century revolutionary politics were beholden to the temporal form of the future – it even gave the name to the first movement of the avant-garde: Futurism. The future was on the side of the revolution. It was a great and empowering myth, but few believe it any longer: the future is over. Its last vestiges were squandered in the schemes of a heavily futurized financial capitalism.[6]

6   Franco Berardi (Bifo), *After the Future*, ed. Gary Genosko and Nicholas Thoburn (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2011), 3. Genosko and Thoburn title the preface 'The Transversal Communism of Franco Berardi'; they convey how Berardi offers a clinical and radical diagnosis towards the end of future frameworks.

So, the chapters in this book address various approaches and strategies such that the central premise includes, but is not limited to, the multi-faceted concerns described within post-future frameworks. The subjects are intentionally diverse and cultivate creative responses that reorganize significant cultural codes from within historical, systemic, socio-political, visual and literary culture.

The authors identify the difficulty of memory in relation to future studies through an influential complexity that continues to negotiate the isolation and fragmentation among national and cross disciplinary perspectives. A primary focus is on realizing interdisciplinary practices that pre-determine and recondition our present-day relationship to the continuing symptoms that refer futurity to the past; its failures; its near futures; and those striking successes. In some instances, such as the chapter by Malcolm Quinn, this is a question of the *suppressed content* of the past and what we can deduce from such knowledge and insight today. Whereas Sarah Bonner, Jennet Thomas and Penny McCarthy ask us to re-imagine the past in order to look further into the future. Conversely, Karl Bell explores how in the past a future modernity was imagined which has already become a present. *Futures Past*[7] written by Reinhart Koselleck in 1985 addresses this very clearly by declaring a 'mutation of historical experience'. Koselleck charts a *horizon of experience and expectation* which in principle was not always related to this world but to myths, prophecies and predestined fate. This notion predicated on the inventions and discoveries that appeared possible within industrialization and modernity, scenarios that presuppose a *consciousness of difference between traditional experience and coming expectation*. The idea of a future and pre-destiny that never actually happens presents a framework around the basic structure and plot for anticipation, isolationism, failure and futurity. The *mutation of historical experience* suggests that expectations simply travel too far and go beyond meaningful formative experience, as Koselleck states:

7   Rienhart Koselleck, *Futures past: on the semantics of historical time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985)

> None of the disappointments that arose when it once more became evident that a prophecy of the End of the World had failed could alter this basic structure of anticipation [...] The opening of a new horizon of expectation via the effects of what was conceived as 'progress' changed this situation.[8]

Beginning along these lines, Quinn repurposes the differing narratives of a desire for future satisfaction and the social organization of satisfaction in the future in relation to his chapter's title, 'The Plot against the Future'. Alongside this, Alberto Abruzzese moves between a single advent/event: modern fiction to the latest seriality; means instead of ends; and the revolt of technics against human progress. He re-questions how deficient and contradictory the subject of time is (the *religious* time of history as a civilization) as a sovereign dimension of modernity which reiterates a perspective shared by Koselleck. Abruzzese perceptively suggests that naming a thing, *Memories of the Future*, enunciates the impossible and at the same time (or rather, precisely because of this) opens itself up to innumerable possibilities: the perception of the impossibility has within itself the retroactive power to remember what has already been consumed and for this reason awaited. In addressing the future of memory, a critical parallel is drawn with the digital world and the technological sphere of the moment. This chapter emphasizes a split in the balance of *words and images* that have reshaped the human struggle not just to *remember*, but to hold on, to survive so that human memories have a chance and also a future.

Introducing Marshall McCluhan's landmark text, *The Medium is the Message*, Abruzzese goes on to permit a *revolt of technics against human progress* or rather, as stated, 'Within technics, there is no distinction between human ends and technological means'. The inference here is being critically re-asserted in reference to superheroes, or more precisely in a model of super-hyper-anti-humanism. This is a humanist dominion that must succumb to a world outside of itself. It must reach beyond the civil and social structures that define its society and move from the seriality of modernity and any singular subject occupied by a sovereign domain. Abruzzese provides a crucial argument about the very nature of memory and future,

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8   Ibid. 265.

annihilating one and another in *the revolt of technics and human progress*. Or rather, Abruzzese stresses a reform or a permission into a different vision of the future, one that is offered up as a model of protection from the human confusion with the nature of things that surround us.

Quinn however sets out to revalorize the very activity of future studies itself by introducing a time machine, a non-standard clock constructed in two settings: the first is a tick whose clock does not quite configure to objects in the way the world uses them – which he later addresses on the theme of counterfactual history. The second, and perhaps more important to the subject of a time machine, is the introduction of Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky's *Memories of the Future*.[9] In referring to *the plot against the future*, Quinn carefully weaves a notion of pseudo plots and pseudo alarms that reassert a restriction on the possibility for the occurrence of the future within the present. As is the case with most future constructions, this chapter exposes a future under experimental conditions by lifting it out of the stream of historical time. In doing this, Quinn exquisitely circulates on the theme of satisfaction in relation to time travel in attesting to the following claim: How could human beings not desire time travel if it is not for satisfaction?

Just like the activity of future studies, something always harbours and lurks within the present repressions of the past unless one is able to find direct advancements in the present time. In conveying the point of time travel, Quinn summarizes this as follows: 'The point of time travel is to

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9   Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky, *Memories of the Future*, trans. Joanne Turnbull (New York: New York Review Books, 2009). Krzhizhanovsky's *Memories of the Future* is the last of seven short stories that remained unpublished and curiously unseen by any publisher during the author's lifetime. Considered subversive when they were written, Krzhizhanovsky's only published book during his lifetime focused on the *The Poetics of Titles*. A thirty-four-page booklet that saved Krzhizhanovsky and permitted him to stay in Moscow without the status of a *nonworking element*. Krzhizhanovsky's *Memories of the Future* reprises the author's transient concerns living in 1920s' Soviet Russia. The stories contain several narratives stemming from a carefree corpse missing his own funeral to an individual's displaced orientation in the darkness of his own room. In each case, the attention unfolds directly towards collective and individual urgencies in order to survive a time-related politics of 1920s' Soviet Russia.

divide everything we know about satisfaction through the social repression of satisfaction from the truth of satisfaction as a social aim. This is accomplished by using the things of this world in a way that the world does not use them'.

Quinn addresses the theme of the time machine to the efficiency of any clock of normal consciousness. He conveys the narrative of Max Shterer, who is the protagonist as well as the creator of his own time machine, in Krzhizhanovsky's *Memories of the Future*. Importantly, however, it is within the multiplicity of each time machine discussed that Quinn also doubles the subject as a warning to those who play with time in relation to objects outside of this world. In support of *We Were Promised Jetpacks*, Quinn reconstructs our failure to distinguish and preserve the utility or function of objects within their time of creation. Our ability to project, fantasize, market and even title the subject is ill-conceived and unqualified in locating departments of future study and so forth. Each attempt forgets to acknowledge how things and objects, immaterial or not, have their own praxis in the world and value the time they inhabit.

In conjunction with this idea is that of counterfactual histories, alongside a final twist adopting Robert Musil's novel *The Man without Qualities*, in which stock characters reside inside the world of Kakania. This is a world where it is impossible to escape in a time machine. In this story *the plot against the future* is a venomous narrative that recreates a parallel campaign that will not permit a division of satisfaction even within counterfactual accounts of history, such as World War I, that does not actually happen but instead is deemed a terminal virus that affects all inside and outside its created world. In returning to the falsehood of prophecies about the future, Quinn's chapter is equally matched by a distinct analysis which manages to liberate the troubling and isolating concerns of time, for the sake of time, and the future. 'The Plot against the Future' bestows an unstinting field of wonderfully calculated time relations, announcing a sophisticated context for 'Part II: Intersections of Memory, Formative Experience and Learned Culture'.

Intersections of Memory, Formative Experience and Learned Culture

'Part II: Intersections of Memory, Formative Experience and Learned Culture' encompasses themes related to the personal past in aspects of art, childhood, education, fairy tale and myth, film, moving and drawn images and speculative fiction. Ordinarily such historical constructions of memory and youth recollection that precede formative experience are deemed a thing of the past, not yet learned. However, a central axis within this section explores notions of newly informed political fairness, justice and social instruction that have not yet been reached. The scholarship in this section represents a potential resource that uniquely revises a working through of formative memories as a model of abandonment, youth, creativity and engagement. The intersections of memory remove the traditional characteristics of memory formation during the initial period of absorption and development. In other words, formative memories change, transform and are often forgotten. They are wiped away and unable to resurface directly again. And yet it is this very structure that provides the building blocks of personal memories, sourced on snippets of marginal evidence that deliver visibility for neglected and overlooked narratives in terms of survival, justice and victimhood. Among these contributions are contemporary art practices alongside Julia Eccleshare, a writer and broadcaster with an emphasis on children's literature. Sarah Bonner, Penny McCarthy and Jennet Thomas all convincingly work through *multi-disciplinarity,* whereby a creative and vital tool in negotiating *sides of justice* (whether academic or artistic) reproduce a divergency for new knowledge in the current fieldwork studies of memory and futurity. In co-opting both literary and fictive accounts, each contribution readily assumes and reinvents traditional and justice orientated readings in order to explore the wealth of today's participatory fields. In some cases, this combines a parallel text in the form of reproduced images comprised of drawings, objects, photographs and video stills.

Eccleshare writes from the perspective of an established historian, writer, and broadcaster on the theme of children's literature in her chapter titled '*Mortal Engines* and *The Hunger Games*: How Myths from the

Past Shape Visions of a Sustainable Future and the Responsibility for It as Represented in Children's Literature'. Immediately it is clear that to Eccleshare, the social instruction of children's literature and the social realism attached to speculative fiction (whether in print or the moving image) is youthful, spirited, and transacting a new cultural dynamism for childhood and literature. She brings an authoritative historical command of intrigue with regard to the uses of fictional narratives that are characteristic of new and imagined worlds. Whether or not these stories are written in times that are now centuries long past (where justice referred to a reasonable welfare state), they continue to grip the reader's imagination. Initially, Eccleshare refers to a romantic period within the genre – the Golden Age of children's literature in Britain – that arrived with the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and changed how a nation thought about childhood in correlation to the then contemporary children's experience. This analysis continues with J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*, Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* and Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*, to name a few. However, Eccleshare's analysis concedes the point of history: a history of written and spoken stories which still, today, majorly reinforces the iconic and at times populist demands embedded in the quest narrative. In revisiting such fruitful tales that continue to offer highly original themes on the workings of a childhood imagination for the adult reader, it is *understanding itself* that continues to grow and build further narrative content. While these stories are so often commercially repeated and internationally translated, such repeats only too often critically extend a highly dubious reinterpretation of the original stories. *Formative Memory* in such examples is commercialized for the masses. In such instances, Eccleshare suggests a future that would not exist without this continual investment at the same time. As Jack Zipes remarks: 'This is because the institution of children's literature must operate more and more within the confines of the culture industry in which the prevailing consumerism and commercialism continues to minimize and marginalize the value of critical and creative thinking, and with it, the worth of an individual human

being'.[10] As Eccleshare fully acknowledges, envisaging the future is also defined in how we exercise the past.

While the chapter explores the multifaceted ventures of reading, stemming from the excitement of the adolescent to the adult, to the transhistorical, dystopian, mythopoetic, Eccleshare introduces a re-imagined window through which key terms of memory, speculation and science fiction are considered. This is in order to establish how the beholder of the story absorbs the moment of engagement outside of a time-based experience. In other words, in relation to children, she states the following: 'Memories also become "shadow knowledge" a way of knowing about something without having experienced it directly.' The same applies to childhood itself, active formative experiences embody and socialize the child safely into adulthood. 'Not-knowing' is part of abandoning expectation and experience in favour of a new decultured horizon. The emphasis here is on great stories, iconic stories, that carry the reader and listener further into the unknown realities of the author's newly captured landscape. So often this is a journey that generates a vital distance from the sitter's memory of daily existence. As noted by Walter Benjamin in *The Storyteller*, a story which also reinforces what has magically gone before as akin to a prior telling, 'experience which is passed on mouth to mouth is the source from which storytellers have drawn'.[11] In keeping with this historical inquiry, Jacqueline Wilson's *The Suitcase Kid*, the Harry Potter franchise and Eccleshare's key examples of Suzanne Collins's *Hunger Games* and Philip Reeve in *Mortal Engines* all duly represent what Benjamin writes. They all relay and repeat successful narrative strategies that derive from written and sometimes oral history.

Following Eccleshare's wonderfully descriptive *fever dream allegory of the adolescent social experience*, Sarah Bonner's chapter 'Girl Acting Out: Revisiting the Fairy Tale Futures of Little Red Riding Hood and Snow White', presents an alternative account to the historicized value of fairy

10   Jack Zipes, 'Why Children's Literature Does Not Exist', in *Sticks and Stones, the troublesome success of children's literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 40–41.

11   Walter Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory, 1900–2000*, ed. Dorothy H. Hale (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 362.

tales within today's society. In contrast to Eccleshare's concern about the function of fairy tale origins engaging the future, Bonner discusses the subject in response to their adopted uses within literature, gender, future dystopias, and most significantly, in how fairy tales reintroduce narrative subversions. Bonner's chapter looks at the unprecedented power of fairy tales through an analysis of Roland Barthes in relation to myth as well as Kaja Silverman and Gayle Greene on feminist fiction.

In approaching the subject through a lens of feminism and gender studies whilst upending a questionable legacy of male-oriented visions of utopia in the past, Bonner acknowledges a rise of Western female protagonists in recently produced adolescent and adult film and literary forms. In recognition of this cultural change, audiences and readers alike experience an increase of *disabling fiction*, as Gayle Greene puts it, a theory that closely aligns itself to a model of disarming the past in order to move into the political unconscious of the present. Such unprovoked actions openly declare and liberate the in-house fluctuations attached to the moral and mythical undertones of the traditional fairy tale. That is reallocating gender ideologically dispossesses the power of the original tale and swiftly reorients a new narrative alignment in the present-future. It also abandons classic associations of *fictional justice* that have yet to be reached, in favour of negotiating a more challenging side to the production of memory.

In this chapter, Bonner looks closely at the re-workings of text, code, writing, reading, and how new meanings reflect a contemporary world-view of global maturation complicated through altering plots. It is a view of non-gender-specific direction within a new narrative reconstruction that becomes a powerful literary and filmic device. It also positions a collective model of self-development pitted against the outmoded utopian ideals of femininity in a fairy tale tradition. Bonner goes further to critically construct this view through the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' in part relation to the contemporary art of Kiki Smith, Paula Rego, Miwa Yanagi, Vanessa Jane Pfaff and Diane Goldstein. In each case, the artworks expose the decultured and overlooked narrativity of material and visual exchanges. Contemporary art practices permit Bonner to close the paper within the complex interdisciplinary languages of art production in relation to the

precarious meanings of fairy tales, narratives, feminism and memories of the future.

In articulating how contemporary art practices consciously reinvest in the themes of historical time and memory, Penny McCarthy contributes a chapter titled 'Mirror: Time Will Darken Paper'. The intriguing claim of this title brings to mind a recent comment by Bruno Latour in which he states, 'we thought there were windows but actually they're mirrors'.[12] Latour is relaying his thoughts on the existence of the Internet as a large unit of posthumous infrastructure. He is suggesting that global knowledge is being consumed, *mirrored* and divested within a wider consciousness, one that is inescapable and intrinsically linked to memories and peripheral online encounters that want something extra from the world's knowledge. Such multidirectional sentiments reaffirm Quinn in 'The Plot against the Future' which betray, abandon and deculture the present whilst reiterating the question of whether we can assess the future. In relation to this, what equals the challenge in appraising the past is that it may reflect something new and unborn in the present.

McCarthy raises such equivalence through the written message of the chapter's title. It is introduced through a series of ten accounts that are referred to in her drawings and written text which are reproduced here. In each case, a subject of ongoing research is explored; from the work of Jorge Luis Borges's *Labyrinths* to a prewritten script for President Nixon in case of a catastrophe during the Apollo 13 mission, to the final section on *The Emigrants* by W. G. Sebald. The chapter swiftly moves between each section, providing a structure that breaks from a standard reading, amounting to what McCarthy calls *erratic assemblages* that acknowledge references which suggest the non-mastery processes of discovery. Once again, where is the justice in such a formative process of memory and discovery? Such readings invite a creative and wonderfully apotropaic association to writing and drawing, whereby it is clear that the activity of drawing lingers as paramount throughout the paper. For McCarthy, the activity of drawing

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12   Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood and Anton Vidokle (eds), *The Internet Does Not Exist* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2015), 40–53.

itself finds a second soul imbued within the various plains, inks, pencils, and papers that compliment the uninformed mirror just before time exists within the depicted image. This is a quality of participation that is vital to all creation.

In the second section, McCarthy writes the following about the practice of drawing: 'Drawing describes the static shapes of memory without betraying the image through a prose exegesis'. In following a delicate relationship between drawing and its often mistaken identity of illustration, McCarthy reinstates the importance of drawing as an act of discovery. Drawing reaffirms a coexistence for creative acts of finding and retrieving whereby memories can form and unite. Furthermore, such an invitation to assess *time* or events in history is separate to memories that attribute vestiges of nostalgia or childhood. As the author notes, 'What I do is more like a work *about* memory than an act of memory.' Such a distinction is at the heart of the later section on Jorge Luis Borges's *Labyrinths*, which underpins the conceptual realities again of drawing as discovery. John Berger states a similar point in his book on drawing where he discusses the drawing processes by Van Gogh: 'yet it has totally forgotten itself in its openness to what it has met'.[13] McCarthy concludes with a wonderful quote from Hannah Arendt's introduction to Walter Benjamin's *Illuminations*: 'What guides this thinking is the conviction that although the living is subject to the ruin of time, the process of decay is at the same time a process of crystallization'.

In the final chapter of 'Part II: Intersections of Memory, Formative Experience and Learned Culture', Jennet Thomas picks up this point. She returns to her past in order to generate a 'dystopian future-past' in the form of a science fiction musical film titled *School of Change*. Thomas introduces a series of thoughts to her science fiction musical film that re-enacts an imaginary return to a world outside the standardised British girls' school of a 1960s' architectural vision. While the film revises the political aspirations of this state-school reality (Thomas was educated at the school), it

13   John Berger, *Berger On Drawing*, ed. Jim Savage (Cork, Ireland: Occasional Press, 2005), 15.

also proposes an analysis of pertinent subjective questions that resurface around the political aspirations of the time. The film is a device for fiction and memory to correlate under an increasingly complex relationship between technology and fantasy in order to reflect the instability of the present time. Thomas constructs an environment over one day, whereby the viewer experiences an individual schoolgirl's learning perspective under a rubric described as *Units of Knowing* – a fictional curriculum that creates a fantastic world between art, childhood, science, and future dystopian pedagogies. It also presents the viewer with a world we do not know.

  School of Change takes a fascinating direction, time travelling into the poetic abyss of memory. Again returning to Quinn's 'The Plot against the Future', it is unclear to Thomas what the value of a future plot might entail. For Thomas, the values of production and participation (schoolgirls currently attending the institution are used as actors in realizing the project) outweigh the anxiety of the future. In Thomas's vision this alone is justice for creation. In contrast to Quinn, here we enter a world that circumnavigates the reality of any questions against the future, in support of a resuscitated dystopian state whereby Thomas evokes her childhood realities with the apparitional presence of her adult subjectivity coming together at the same time.

The Reconditioning of Time

'Part III: The Reconditioning of Time' focuses on aspects of knowledge retrieval that are at hand, or rather, in the act of retrieving information, whether historic, economic or philosophical, offers a resistance to rhetorical conventions within the discourse of future frameworks. The authors share and value an appreciation of what is 'reconditioned' when *futurity* presents a series of co-dependent and continually altering set of assumptions. Another way to examine this is to consider an opposing contrast to the multiplicity and diversity that is currently published on future studies

and what this in fact entails.[14] Whereby multiple perspectives inhabit and normalize a relationship of *ownership, origin, expertise and method*, as noted by Barbara Adam in her introduction to *Future Matters*[15] and in relation to her book with Chris Groves published a year earlier, titled: *Future Matters, action, knowledge, ethics*.[16] They lay claim to the following concerns on the future that: 'relate to *ownership* (who is thought to own the future), to *origin* (where and when the future originates, its source), to *expertise* (who are deemed to be experts in the future), and to *methods* (what methods and knowledge tools are considered legitimate)'.[17] Liam Sprod, Claudio Celis and Austin Houldsworth develop several aspects of this claim. Adam and Groves state how this 'concerns the very uneven relation between doing, knowing and caring, between action, knowledge and ethics. Wherever we care to look we cannot fail but notice that the contemporary industrial societies' capacity and competence to produce futures is phenomenal. These created futures potentially reach to the end of time.'[18]

While this statement resonates with an undeniable universality it also touches on how Austin Houldsworth's chapter explores the *socializing* dependence of technology in aspects of the future, a subject that is clearly premised and organized in Adam and Groves project.[19] However,

14   Consult: <https://www.wfsf.org/about-us> accessed 12 August 2016.
15   Barbara Adam, 'Future Matters', *21st Century Society, Journal of the Academy of Social Sciences* (2008), 112.
16   Barbara Adam and Chris Groves, *Future Matters, Action, Knowledge, Ethics* (Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2007).
17   Ibid. 17–19.
18   Ibid. xiv.
19   Another example of a clearly outlined project for future frameworks appears in the pluralistic approach to understanding futures studies as listed by the WFSF. The list makes the case of five identified approaches to future studies under headings such as: '*empirical-positivist* tradition, which focuses on trend analysis and prediction, originated in the USA. It was supported by the formation of the World Future Society in the 1960s; The *critical-normative* tradition originated in Europe and grew out of a critique of what was perceived as an overly empirical approach to futures in the USA. This led to the foundation of the World Futures Studies Federation in the early 1970s; The *cultural-interpretive* tradition arose in large measure from the work of those WFSF members who sought to include non-Western cultures

we are turning our attention more closely to the low-intensity struggle of analytical philosophy (Liam Sprod), the designed researched imaginary (Austin Houldsworth) and the speculative economies (Claudio Celis) of present future research. The emphasis in these three chapters is less on the importance of ethical and action-based concerns and more on the uneventful and *uneven* aspects of an unconditional future. This is a future studies account that materializes at the heart of diverse cross-disciplinary practices (philosophy, economy, design), whereby fields *or origins* of thought combine *expert* interstices that parallel the inconsistent links so often considered marginalized, disassociated and undervalued. The authors propose a reconditioning of time without the satisfaction of knowing a result, a competent verdict or actual ending of time. In referring to the end of time, it is in reconsidering the periodization (including revolutionary movements) of future studies that encapsulate nostalgia and origin over actualization; 'The Reconditioning of Time' retrieves new knowledge by sidestepping this view of time in favour of slowly building a less conventional, less convincing and uneven sense of time. The *reconditioning* in this case adopts the *unassuming* voice of future indifferences, the technical and psychological inability to foresee and properly account for one's actions in the present (D. H. Ingvar's pre-frontal cortex and 'loss of the future'), whilst highlighting on cross disciplinary methods and approaches that perform the slower, reduced, existence of time– the reinvented will that is so often the very structure for future discussions.

In 'The Blackening of *Epekeina Tes Ousias*: The Death of the Sun and the Death of Philosophy', Sprod argues for a mental stake in the death of philosophy. He inscribes an attempt to reason with a direct and unflinching gaze at the sun, whereby the retina of the viewer moves into

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and to invoke a deeper consideration of civilizational and planetary futures; The *empowerment-activist,* prospective, action research approach began in Europe in the nineties and has been taken up by some Australian researchers; The *integral/ transdisciplinary* futures approach is newly emerging and appears to have potential for authentic multiperspectival and planetary inclusion, providing it remains open.' <https://www.wfsf.org/> accessed 12 August 2016.

solitude from bright light to the slowed-down world of complete darkness. Such a transition is brought to evaluate the future of philosophy. This is a point that suggests a notion beyond the capacity of vision itself and recalls the essential solitude of Maurice Blanchot. Blanchot writes in relation to a letter Rilke wrote to the countess of Solms Laubach explaining his emptied state, his failed attempts to write, which consequently Blanchot describes as: 'the solitude of which he speaks is not the essential solitude. It is concentration.'[20] Moreover, Blanchot invites an intellectual rationale for a future sentiment, whereby a parallel to Sprod discussing the extinction of the sun or the philosophical end of the future permits such a relationship to concentration. Sprod's argument intensifies and continues to waver between two ontological positions on the future of the sun in relation to the status of death and extinction, that of Heidegger's *phenomenological being towards death* and that of Ray Brassier's direct assault on Heidegger. Both indicate further on a discourse surrounding the sensitivities of light and subsequent fallout where utter darkness and allegory are on the side of Derrida and the sun's extinction is on the side of Brassier.

'The Blackening of *Epekeina Tes Ousias*' compels us to reconsider the cultural value of future philosophical thought. As Abruzzese remarks, if human progress was not in a position to think about the future, what would replace the space of future thinking? So, in fact, if we could not look outside and see the sun, what would this imply? If philosophy is absolute and the past is forever reflected forward into the eternal brightness of the world, it is also in danger of a nocturnal shadow lurking between the sun's rays. Within the various registers of non-philosophy, Sprod evaluates the apocalyptical tone of philosophy in *under the light of an already dead blinding and blackened sun*. While such sentiments echo the entrenched periodization of historical future accounts, this chapter simultaneously echoes a collective memory whereby the image value of the sun is defined not simply by resolution and content but by intensity, velocity, and speed

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20   Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 23.

– all vital ingredients to the Futurist Manifesto which is discussed later in Part IV of this book by Ilaria Puri Purini.

In adjusting the allegorical frame of darkness, Claudio Celis discusses the economy of such predictions in his chapter titled: 'The Attention Economy: From Cyber-Time to Cinematic Time'. Celis is congruently concerned with the duration of time and the temporality of these conditions as presented through a prism of Bernard Stiegler's notion of cinematic time. In correlating information to economic capital – an increasing form of attention that relies heavily on the fiscal insecurity of the future – Celis carefully distinguishes our human faculties in relation to the constitutions of time, speed and information. He reasserts how the collective drives that disperse such vital human resources also do the opposite in binding us to those very structures (such as biocapitalist futures) that do not amount to a future that is equal to the actual human time that might be possible.

Within this critique and assessment of economic culture, Celis presents a perspective that is not unnoticed. In their recent publication *Bioinsecurity and Human Vulnerabilty*, Lesley A. Sharp and Nancy N. Chen move directly towards the bioinsecurity of life outside of attention states, whether economic, environmental, political or social, they describe the following conditions that led to the title and use of the word *bioinsecurity* for their book: 'Moreover, the vagueness of its definition facilitates its proliferation: in the United States especially, one seems to know inherently that new dangers threatening the safety of human populations all too naturally belong under the aegis of biosecurity.'[21] What is curious here is that human attention may well be the reason we have forged history to forecast a better future, a more informed future, or rather, prospects of a more engaged relationship to time itself. It is these very discrepancies that Celis's paper handles so well: the reality of cyber-time and human-time postulating a deep undeclared threat. It is in the forecasting of an imprecise threat that an intriguing relationship between Celis and Stielger's use of cinema embodies a mechanical future with human time. As Stiegler

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21   Lesley A. Sharp and Nancy N. Chen, *Bioinsecurity and Human Vulnerabilty* (New Mexico: Sar Press, 2015), xii.

states, this is between the opposition of the 'living psychic time' and the 'dead technical memory'.

What if this is not the case for the future? Austin Houldsworth approaches the valued aspects of Stiegler's cinema and Celis's attention economy as possible constructs for new interactive memories of times gone before. His chapter focuses on the *what if* premise of histories that might have turned out differently or *history as it might have been*, so to speak. Houldsworth reiterates the importance of a less conventional perspective of history with a countervision, alternating timelines that are traditionally aligned to industry, invention and artistic production. As noted by Adams, 'the future is the "not yet". It is the realm of potential and possibility, an empty vessel to be filled with dreams and desires, plans and projects'.[22] All of which Houldsworth explores in his work.

Houldsworth's use of counterfactual history generates alternatives and redesigns history with the *illusion of history* reset into a new timeline – history as an exception to the rule. In relation to Houldsworth, Quinn's 'The Plot against the Future' reasserts this illusion to Houldsworth's chapter title: 'Counterfiction: Designing within Alternative Worlds'. Houldsworth inculcates the counterfactual history process by designing reality from fiction – counterfictional design practices attempt to reconsider radical forms of 'socially dependent technologies' against a conservative design-oriented past. It is an attempt to produce new understandings within recent productivity and future relationships. As stated in thinking through counterfactual testaments: 'Designers, particularly those of a speculative and critical leaning, use counterfactual questions to facilitate the creation of alternative material culture'.

Instinctively, such a progressive premise explores new design possibilities, counterfictional journeys such as *Goebbels's Teapot*, designed by Noam Toran and Onkar Kular in 2008 under a project titled *The MacGuffin Library* is one such example. As Quinn and Houldsworth both suggest, such productions implicate and re-represent an alternative outcome in times of war (e.g. the example of Germany and Britain in World War II), therefore

22   Barbara Adam and Chris Groves, *Future Matters. Action, Knowledge, Ethics* (London: Brill, 2007), 111.

championing a counterfictional model of representation in contemporary design strategies.

In highlighting several other examples of counterfictional practice – namely, Mohammed J. Ali's fictitious 2014 *Application Form*, from a project titled *A New Scottish Enlightenment*, to Sascha Pohflepp's 2009 project *The Golden Institute* –Houldsworth negates conventional and normative design relations with those grounded in the counterfictional model. This notion is founded on whether *grounded design* can be successful in the first instance, which correlates to the implausible design example of David Attenborough creating Microsoft instead of Bill Gates. In generating timelines that fluctuate so freely, counterfactual conditions suggest an openly liberal function not just towards historical and social accounts but also in the physical and material value of things in the time of their fact-based creation. As Houldsworth states, 'One of the key reasons to use a counterfactual conditional within design is to facilitate a shift in the cultural context and established value systems that inform the built environment and material culture'.

Houldsworth draws our attention to a fascinating design project he titled: *Walden Note-Money*, in which a new social space is constructed to reflect further on an egalitarian state as proposed in 1948 by B. F. Skinner in his utopian novel *Walden Two*. This project looks closely at a model of design exchange whereby a greener notion of capital is physically burnt and replaced by musical notes. In creating *Walden Note-Money,* Houldsworth proposes a monetary system that also reassesses the subject of Western classlessness, which endlessly succumbs to the present era that is so heavily dominated by neo-capitalist debt-ridden economies. This is of course a fraught time for the mass factions of society that remain underpaid and overworked. And yet Houldsworth's *Walden Note-Money* project intrinsically rallies a pioneering optimism in the production of a counterfictional design practice that resets and targets a distinctively improved future in mind.

Future Permissions and Former Horizons

Part IV of this book focuses on recent notions of *actuality* and thus productive realizations of future and memory fields. It looks at how the *actualizing* of new and former horizons combine an interdisciplinary approach towards the potential for new multi-perspectival formations. So, in conceding reproductive permissions and socially plausible actions, recent technologies give rise to advanced future studies' expertise. 'Part IV: Future Permissions and Former Horizons' searches for an assessment of reassurances or forecasts (former horizons) associated with recent technologies alongside the industrial and the mechanical ages of past future productions.

In communicating future practices of memory studies, as this book demonstrates throughout an uneven historical timeline, this final section appropriately ends with Karl Bell's visionary analysis of Victorian street ballads that embody the imaginary and extraordinary feats of previous generations. In returning to a period of future invention and history, Bell reinstates why it is no longer simply the mechanics of a machine or the technological headways of men and woman, but rather, whether they will simply become mere machines or products of human redundancy. Following on from Houldsworth's *Walden Note-Money* project, Ilaria Puri Purini *seizes* the future by revisiting *The Futurists* and various future-oriented contemporary artworks whereby the mechanical relations of a former horizon now progress towards more recent smart technologies. This is a continuing theme throughout and is followed by the increasing developments in fashion technology and scientific research that continually evolves into a present-day material condition. Lianne Toussaint and Anneke Smelik predict a curious rise in *wearable technology*, and yet, what does it mean to give permission to future horizons of technology? Equally, what is it to authorize a memory of the future? Exactly what is it to grant permission?

In a recently published contribution to memory studies by the sociologist Paolo Jedlowski titled, *Memories of the Future*, Jedlowski identifies and wrestles with a perspective that points towards the following: *Memories of the Future are recollections of what individuals and groups expected in the*

past.[23] Although Jedlowski makes the point that this perspective stems from aspects of Adam and Groves, he also reiterates that it is a complex one. He infers a *horizon of expectations and futures past* that sum up the totalizing combination of both memory and futurity as intertwined fields or disciplines of study. As stated in the following words, 'such horizon is referred to what is "not yet", but, since it is perceived, it is part of the now'.[24] Jedlowski extends the point addressed in relation Houldsworth's '*what if*' and this statement also offers a different context to what Adam and Groves remark on the future state of '*not yet*' and the realm of potential possibility. Jedlowski concludes with a vital distinction of how 'memories of the future represent an exhortation to critically reconsider past expectations and renew the action'.[25]

It is in *renewing the action* that one can claim and resuscitate the *actuality* and productive realizations of today's Memories of the Future. This kind of *action* that Jedlowski alludes to is carefully mapped out in recalling *futures past horizons*, whereby futurity and memory studies have existed in the past, Jedlowski charts a distinct union for what he describes as 'materially tangible' in the past. This in turn provides evidence and legitimacy to present day research. Reproducing empirical study for *futures past horizons* of thought, conversation, anticipation, action and documentation are made critically possible.

'Part IV: Future Permissions and Former Horizons' engages the untimely interstices that interconnect scientific memory, technological future discovery and social experimentation as addressed by Purini, Toussaint, Smelik and Bell. Though insightfully realized, these chapters offer a bridge to multi-perspectival formations that further act on the consequences of this project. As noted by Jedlowski, 'We know that there are

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23   Consult Paolo Jedlowski's 'Memories of the Future' in the *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, ed. Anna Lisa Tota and Trever Hagen, in Chapter 11 (p. 122). However, this quote was first written in Italian, 2013, under a different title: 'Memorie del futuro. Una ricognizione', *Studi culturali* 2 (X): 171–187.

24   Ibid. 122

25   Ibid. 128

social frameworks of memory but there are also social frameworks of the ways we imagine the future'.

Purini's precedent on the Futurists, which ruminates from the outset on an increased inclination to adopt *future* as a featured title for cultural and recent curatorial events, such as the 2015 Venice Biennale titled *All the World's Futures*. Purini highlights just how many recent cultural activities include a future theoretical premise within their respective proposals. Vital distinctions question such usages within the undeclared timeline that *future* titling suggests. In relation to this concern she states this as 'a helpful device when speculating on expectations and anticipating divergences'. This is a point that echoes Koselleck in *Futures Past* and Purini attentively addresses this when closely looking at contemporary art practices in relation to the legacy produced by the Italian Futurist movement as the chapter title indicates: 'Seizing the Future: The Futurists and Future-oriented Contemporary Works'.

It is not a secret that the Futurists sought an avant-garde reflection on a world that they considered lost and withdrawn from the cultural zest of its time. Ideas of cultural progression in Italy were continually led from the past and not from the present. Although this is an avant-garde movement that caught the attention of an eager public, its proponents achieved this by suggesting an insurgent inquiry was necessary in multiple forms not just in painting but in theatre, literature, politics, and even food. However, one of the most interesting documents from this movement is the Futurist Manifesto. In this respect, the central question Purini poses is, *What happens when we contrast future-orientated works from the past with future-oriented works of contemporary art?* Purini presents an intriguing account that recalls the very first point of the Futurist Manifesto which seeks to address the following: 'We want to sing about the love of danger, about the use of energy and recklessness as common, daily practice.'[26] And yet, while the Futurists' activities are well documented in previously written historical accounts that succinctly dissect their male-oriented relationship to speed, cars and technology, Purini generates a complex relationship to

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26 'The Future Manifesto' can be found in F. T. Marinetti, *Critical Writings*, ed. Gunter Berghaus, trans. Doug Thompson (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 13.

such far-reaching collective agendas. Firstly, in the undoing of Futurist successes and secondly by contrasting the interactions of the contemporary viewer (future permissions) to that of the Futurist moments of production. Today one is physically, if not traditionally, *haptic* in one's engagements with the work of art, as Purini explores.

In comparing the Futurists to the various strategies adopted by today's contemporary artists ranging from Katie Paterson, Johann Arens and Josh Blackwell – alongside the use of a drawing by an anonymous nineteenth-century illustrator – Purini invites a critical and comparative interplay in response to the aims and times of the Futurists' endeavours. In the first of these, Paterson begins with the mobilization of nostalgia from the time-based memories of the present day being transferred a hundred years into the future in a work titled *Library of Future*. The second proposition moves into the artwork of Johann Arens where the public audience ingests a model of live interaction and participation through touch, sense, and a possible caress. Arens instigates and is interested to speculate on a tactile response to the reception of a work of contemporary art. Increasingly, over the last decade, audience participation has assumed a more central position in the general public's understanding of contemporary art, and the kind of gesture to which Arens' artworks attest is equally embedded in the realities of everyday screen technology, as noted by Purini. In *Aerial City,* the creator proposes a futuristic mapping of fantastical architecture for a city, a subject to which the Futurists will return to, with their creative optimism decades later.

Lastly, this is followed by the mediating and wearable artworks of Josh Blackwell's *Plastic Bag*s. These are created without technology and based within the dynamism of craft, local anthropology, and material history whilst simultaneously returning Purini's chapter to the raw energy of the Futurists Manifesto. 'Seizing the Future: The Futurists and Future-oriented Contemporary Works' alludes to future permissions, actions and adoption – what is actually seized in the present does not proportionately reflect on the visionary impact the Futurists attempted to address.

Anneke Smelik and Lianne Toussaint introduce a social level of recent invention and *wearable technology*. In their chapter they requalify statements by Bradley Quinn, who writes, 'often simply called "wearables",

which consists of the integration of fashion and technology by embedding electronics, vitamins, microprocessors, solar cells or panels, (O)LEDs, or interactive interfaces into the fabric, textile, or clothing.'

The authors carefully weave a dynamic relationship among new materials and physical memories, all the time considering whether this produces a proactive model for the progressive fashion industry's consumer-based public. However, a key distinction is drawn out on whether *wearables* conduct design-utility, steampunk aesthetics, or desirable aesthetics. Do they propose a highly fluid and integrated use of the corporeal and new memory-based technologies? Whether fashion is *promiscuously* appropriating memory as history of its subjects or obsessively consuming the posthumous garments of the past, the industry itself is a booming technocratic culture of time-based relevance. Further researching along these lines, the authors focus on a distinct collection by Hussein Chalayan titled *One Hundred and Eleven*. Chalayan introduced a series of mechanical outfits that involved technically sophisticated vocabularies of both hard and soft material technologies that include the wearable object as integrated and independently coexistent and on view for the first time. Similar to Houldsworth, this returns the subject to *socially dependent technologies*.

The remarkable journey for the subject of wearables draws a curious parallel with the rise of counterfactual design conditions. In commenting on this, one can draw attention to the wearable disposition as conversely more productive and realistic whilst also in stark opposition to the future accounts of *counterfictional optimism* as presented by Houldsworth. Yet wearables struggle to escape the impersonal status they have so far acquired. Their beguiling invention assumes advanced forms of technological prowess that are conceptually under pressure if the receiver, or *wearer*, is reluctant to find pleasure in the product. In this situation, the fashion and textile industry can of course set a precedent for future-oriented products that do not fully integrate to their time of production. If the wearables do not absorb the precise sensorium of the public sphere, it is unlikely they will progress to the dizzying heights of media high street visibility that they so desire. The authors state that in order to 'conquer the street', wearables require a contemporary understanding of the body as a mobile, active, socially independent portal that encompasses an embodied practice. As

specified in relation to Chalayan, 'the garment becomes an interface, a plat-form where technological, embodied and cultural dimensions of memory perform and interact'. Accordingly, the authors point out a movement in techno-fashion that is an integrated reflection on the *Future Permissions and Former Horizons* of the present, but one that also offers newer agency in the upcoming exchanges of garment technology progression.

Technological, digital, mechanical and industrial successes are often not understood or accepted in real time until the realization of a physical product. Karl Bell recalls imaginary narratives that magnificently demon-strate the human spirit as exceeding a future imaginary permit. Bell turns the *fantasized perceptions of emergent technology* into remastered articula-tions of Victorian street ballads. In an overlooked and under-researched field, he readdresses the conservative proletariat leanings of these ballads by reinstating their cultural value and recognition. The chapter carefully plots and adjusts the perceptions and significances of the ballads, their attitudes, and their reflections that are acknowledged as fearful of change. '(Un)knotting Time: Imagining Past Futures in Early Victorian Street Ballads' reimagines future frameworks or rather *steampunk fantasies of the past* in order to assess, criticize and explore Victorian society.

Bell discusses these as time-travelling ballads that explore future eman-cipatory freedoms. However, these freedoms exist in relation to subversive tendencies and surreal absurdities between the balladeer's tale and the con-ditions of the listener or reader. Such a powerful premise is fleshed out and analysed further in order to understand how in an age of mechanical and technological reproduction notions of cultural revision, imaginary foresee-ing, and general futurity were absolutely necessary. The more preposterous and anti-establishment the ballad, the further one can expand on the critical distances of time and future creation. In the ballads *A Prophecy for 1973* or *A 100 Years to Come*, a key imaginary concern might be for a future that is perhaps forgotten. In any case, notions of absurd and wondrous freedoms are presented in narrative profusions that begin a counter to the industrial ages of early capitalism, as Bell states:

> the utopian future was both an imaginary space and narrative that served as a means of voicing dissent while tacitly challenging both contemporary inequalities and, perhaps more subversively, notions of the permanence of current power structures.

> Like the carnivalesque, these ballads drew upon bawdy humour and the absurd as their *weapons of the weak*.

Bell articulates this scenario clearly in the story of a veteran who lost his arm and has it replaced with a magical *Steam Arm*. Cleverly, he continues to weave and unpick the various moments of time that attempt to frame and imagine futures in the present and in the past. The chapter '(un)knots' the Victorian past with a caution for the present historian's uses of the past. Within this construction, the author isolates a postmodern inclination to assess and borrow from historical relations either to the past or the past futures. The chapter's knot becomes doubly complicated in reference to the steampunk genre; in another sense, it is easy to misinterpret future appropriations as a product of unhealthy borrowing rather than future producing. Bell concludes by asking, whose memories of the future are we now recalling? It is a powerfully stated and unavoidable question that evokes the optimistic uses of Victorian ballads whilst similarly highlighting the importance of contrariness, liberty, futurity and memory all working at the same time.

This now brings us closer to the necessary permissions for a future belonging. Notably, this is a more complex position that situates a reproducing subject in each chapter in the book. It is the altered attention and mutual recognition of future and memory, that ideas are shared and these subjects meet. If we compare present-day society with the immaterial labours of the past, we begin to fully acknowledge the importance of unrealized horizons and unmade future visions that attempt to articulate similar ideals of justice, community and visions of fairness. Whether in art or technology, the desire to lead and cultivate such a site of ambition with extraordinary visions is a counterpart to a philosophical enquiry.

Together, in connective purpose, the chapters turn towards the longevity of the future subject. Much of our attention is based on explorations and constructions that arise from the horizons of the past – the former present. And yet these very oscillations and timelines are the intersections of memory and futurity, just as ancient myths and present day narratives support future scenarios. They exist within a global communication network of social and political, capitalist structuring and continue to complicate, liberate, and govern our common world.