# The Time of Anthropology

## Studies of Contemporary Chronopolitics

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# Introduction

The time of anthropology: studies of
contemporary chronopolitics and
chronocracy

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# Introduction

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> I do not define time, space, place and motion as being well known to all. But it must be observed that the vulgar conceive those quantities only from the relation they bear to sensible objects. And thence arise certain prejudices, for the removing of which, it is proper to distinguish them into absolute and relative, true and apparent, mathematical and vulgar.
>
> I. Absolute, true and mathematical time, in itself, from its own nature, flows equally, without relation to anything external; and by another name is called Duration. Relative, apparent, and vulgar time is some sensible and external measure of duration by motion, whether accurate or unequable, which is commonly used instead of true time; as an hour, a day, a month, a year.
>
> Isaac Newton *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (*Philosophiae Naturalis, Principia Mathematica*). Cambridge, Trinity College – July 1687. Scholium page 12

### The time of anthropology

When we proposed 'time' as the theme of ASA 2016, one of our colleagues commented that 'it had already been done'. It is true that, in terms of ASA conferences, ASA 2002 did consider the 'qualities of time' and produced a stimulating volume using the lens of ethnography to reflect on just what these qualities are (James and Mills 2005). More dauntingly for us, however, the subject of time has been the focus of sustained and critical scrutiny by a long list of anthropological luminaries. Durkheim, Van Gennep, Evans-Pritchard, Leach, Levi-Strauss, Gell, Fabian, Munn and Bear, to name but a few, have all 'done' time, so to speak. If we bring in the philosophical tradition of 'doing' time, to which the anthropological one is often hitched – here think Aristotle, Kant, Heidegger, Bergson, Russell, McTaggart and many more – the field becomes not only wide but very deep. What more is there to say?

Before answering this question, however, a pinch of realism is in order. The 'temporal turn' which this volume joins and hopefully pushes forward is in fact not really a 'turn' at all, but a *re*turn. As with all claims to intellectual shifts, rethinking and novelty, caution is needed if we are not simply to

imbibe old wine in new bottles. The return we have in mind here is to a basic repertoire of themes in our efforts to understand time, society and personhood and moreover just how these might be brought into an illuminating and productive relationship with one another. The themes that are typically returned to, can be grouped under three broad perspectives which each treat time as the object of enquiry but do so in rather different ways. The first of these we gloss as physical time. This is the time that Newton identified in the quotation above. This time is about duration and it is inexorable. For example, one only has to think of the temporal and irreversible separation between a cause and its effect to grasp this point. The kind of time that appears in this separation is universal and abstract, outside of culture and eternal. It is the view from nowhere or rather no particular time. We might think of this perspective as anchoring *the* anthropology of time. The second object of enquiry is social time. Here, we encounter the fact that the apprehension of time as duration is always mediated by representations and epistemologies that are systematic and shared. The study of temporality here falls squarely in the realms of society and culture. Accordingly, this kind of time is taken to be relative, multiple and diverse. This is the view from somewhere or some particular time. This perspective gives rise to *anthropologies* of time rather than a single, hegemonic anthropology *of* time. The third perspective places phenomenological time at its centre. Here, the emphasis shifts to individual experiences of time; how these experiences are created and how they feature in each person's sense of being and becoming as it is shaped under this or that set of conditions. This is the view from someone, situated in a particular time. This perspective might be thought of as the anthropology of *times*.

Studies of temporality across the social sciences invariably proceed by a triangulation between these cardinal positions. Yet, much as we try to turn we are apt to return to the interplay of physical, social and phenomenological time in some form or other. An image that might be helpful in getting us out of the 'nothing new under the sun' dilemma is that of the spiral or more precisely the Archimedes' screw. This beautiful and ubiquitous form combines both circularity and temporality. Following the curve of a spiral around its fixed central axis, it is possible to arrive at the same point on one plane but to have moved forward on another. So, having made clear that there is much in what follows in this introduction that is derivative and indebted to an important tradition of scholarship on the topic of time, what is it that we are offering by way of another turn of the spiral? What is the incremental move forward that we are trying to demonstrate?

The present collection emerges out of the ASA 2016 conference, "Footprints and Futures: The time of Anthropology", held 4–7 July at Durham University. One of our hopes for the conference was that in focussing on the 'time of anthropology' (rather than foregrounding the discipline of anthropology as in an 'anthropology of time') we might open a discursive space in which to reflect on the way that we as anthropologists are folded into the temporalities we seek to understand and describe. From within a broad set

of concerns about anthropology and temporality presented at the conference, a particularly strong theme emerged around time and power, that is, the study of temporalities that are not merely multiple and parallel (as in anthropologies of time) but which are imbricated in the contemporary world in ways that are hegemonic and incongruent. The volume expresses the spirit of the Durham conference through a series of anthropological case studies of how this relationship is worked through in a variety of different settings. The thread which connects all these contributions is the concept of chronocracy, a term that draws attention to the ways in which governance is shot through with the power to shape the temporalities in which people live out their everyday lives. The study of chronocracy thus makes differently visible the ways in which inequality and exclusionary practices and the ontological and economic insecurity they engender are not just spatial matters but also have important temporal dimensions. This leads us to define chronocracy as *the discursive and practical ways in which temporal regimes are used in order to deny coevalness and thereby create deeply asymmetrical relationships of exclusion and domination either between humans (in diverse contexts) or between humans and other organisms and our ecologies.*

In the remainder of this introduction we elaborate on this definition in order to situate our argument within the existing field of anthropological studies of temporality, to demonstrate how it represents a modest advance on existing scholarship and, finally to show how the contributors to the volume each in their own way illustrate and take forward the chronocracy thesis.

### *Analytical traditions – critical genealogies*

An important foundation for the anthropological study of time is provided by the *Année Sociologique* and specifically the writing of Hubert and Durkheim (Hubert 1905; Durkheim 1915: 11). In this approach, it is the experience of cycles, rhythms and calendrical events that provides the basis for systems of representation. These systems establish time as an entity which is fundamentally social and relational in character. The study of such systems has been the bedrock of anthropological analyses as well as for the way other social sciences view time and temporality as an object of enquiry (cf. Wallis 1970; Kosseleck 1985; Adam 1990; Klinke 2013). Building on these insights, anthropological interests elaborated on systems of time-reckoning and measurement. For example, although an approach has been characterised as an 'empiricist' one (cf. Rigby 1983; Munn 1992: 96), its emphasis on the importance of agricultural activities like gardening, as opposed to natural lunar cycles, puts Trobriand 'time reckoning' in line with later anthropological emphasis on the social and symbolic properties of indigenous perceptions of time. Similarly, the notion of time-reckoning was used by Evans-Pritchard in his distinction between 'oecological time' and 'structural time' (1939). Whilst both of these registers refer to social time, the former relates more to daily social activities (or what Gell calls the microscopic),

while the latter to the political order of genealogies as institutions on a macroscopic scale (cf. Gell 1992: 15, 21).

The subject of time also featured in the works of Levi-Strauss (1963, 1966), Leach (1961) and Geertz (1973) among others. However, as Munn notes, up until the nineties time was "the handmaiden to other anthropological frames and issues" rather than a subject studied for its own sake (1992: 93). This observation did not stop Alfred Gell from devoting several chapters and the conclusion of *The Anthropology of Time* (1992) to a systematic criticism of the ontological legacies of Durkheim and Bergson that had been so influential in anthropological accounts of time up to that point. The main analytical weakness in Durkheim's approach, argued Gell, was a misreading of Kant and his attempts to map a series of sociological arguments onto a philosophical and metaphysical framework (1992: 14). Bergson is also critiqued by Gell for his use of the concept of duration as, by extension, is Ingold (1986). Gell's concern is that in much of what passed for the anthropological study of time, there is a maladaptation of phenomenology which privileges the order of lived-time over the abstract mathematical one (Gell 1992: 314–328).

Gell's 1992 work has undoubtedly been a major source of orientation for anthropological analyses of time since its publication. However, most commentators have tended to focus on his notion of temporal maps rather than the polemical side of his work (e.g. Hodges 2008, 2010; Bear 2014, 2016; Ringel 2016a). Gell's concept of time-maps is indeed inspiring and provides a point of return throughout the discussions of time and temporality found in this volume. For the time-being, however, we would like to examine more closely an aspect of Gell's work that has not received appropriate attention, namely his more polemical pronouncements on time and anthropology.

Since the parallel publications of Gell and Munn in 1992, we can trace two analytical genealogies in the anthropological literature on time. The first, influenced by Gell, emphasises the present, locates diversity at the level of multiple *understandings* and *experiences* of time, and calls attention to the effects of what humans *do* with time. The second can be traced back through Munn to the phenomenological approaches of Bergson and Deleuze. Time here is seen as durée which underpins a recognition of the existence of *multiple and imbricated temporalities.* We will not attach names to each analytical genealogy. It seems rather pointless to create a virtual debate between scholars who have not felt thus far like debating with each other on the basis of the philosophical roots of their respective approaches. Most importantly though, frequently these two traditions seem to co-exist in post-2000 literature that is based on eclectic combinations of ideas and mostly refuses to remain faithful to one analytical perspective at the expense of the other – turns are often returns! But if this is the case, why do we want to revive Gell's polemic? Let us begin with Gell's statements which we cite at length:

> The aim is not, therefore, to transcend the logic of the everyday, familiar world… There is no fairyland where people experience time in a way

that is markedly unlike the way in which we do ourselves, where there is no past, present and future, where time stands still, or chases its own tail, or swings back and forth like a pendulum… The whole thrust of this book has been to insist on a distinction between time and the processes which happen in time. I have opposed the trend of thought which distinguishes different species and varieties of time on the basis of different types or processes happening in time… The whole point of an abstract category such as 'time' is precisely that it provides the means for the relative unification of otherwise diverse categories of processes… It is merely patronizing to leave exotic ethnographic models of the world uncriticised, as if their possessors were children who could be left to play forever in an enchanted garden of their own devising… While it is certainly true that rituals dramatize time, and even manipulate it… this does not mean that calendric festivals either create time or modify it, except rhetorically or symbolically… The elusive time which emerges from the analysis of ritual categories… cannot be detached from the ponderous entropic time of real-world events.

(1992: 314, 315, 324, 326)

The legacy that Alfred Gell left in *The Anthropology of Time*, we argue, goes beyond his inspiring analysis of the cultural construction of temporal maps and images. It is apparent between the lines of the entire book, but more so in its conclusion which fiercely attacks 'muddled phenomenology' (1992: 328), yet also alludes to something rather more sinister, namely, the political nature of 'allochronism' and its deeply asymmetrical effects in our ethnographic practice. 'Allochronism' is a term coined by Fabian and refers to kinds of ethnographic analysis and writing that dis-place the 'other' from present time thereby denying them coevalness (1983: 32). Fabian, in drawing attention to 'the time of anthropology', claimed that anthropological discourses can be seen as temporalising, existential, rhetorical and political devices that produce (and not just represent) other worlds as living in different timelines from that of the ethnographer (ibid.). His work illuminated the colonial and imperial sedimentations in the discipline of Anthropology and inspired further critical post-colonial thoughts on the asymmetrical effects of academic uses of time (cf. Agnew 1996). This problematic is one that the present volume returns to as a primary but not yet entirely accounted for concern.

   Through a unifying approach to time as an organising principle of human affairs (1992: 315), Gell sought to banish precisely this allochronism. His polemic challenges an anti-rationalism which he saw as entering through the back door of phenomenology and Durkheimian-inspired accounts of ritualistic time that conflate 'real time' with experiences of time. By refusing to accept the existence of different and exotic kinds of time, Gell refused the existence of different and exotic kinds of people who purportedly confuse objective reality with their symbolic representations of reality. His

distinction between time and the processes that happen in time strives to bring us all (informants and anthropologists) into a common present. One may argue that Gell's common present is heavily inspired by an understanding of the 'real' as underpinned by notions of scientific objectivity (1992: 328) and thus a peculiarly 'Western' rationality. We have already implicitly acknowledged and pre-empted this objection through our opening quote from Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, which we will invite the reader to compare with Gell's ideas about A- and B-series time further on. Whether or not Gell is right or wrong in his vision of what this common present entails is a secondary matter for our discussion here. What remains is his unequivocal antithesis to ontologies that potentially promote non-coevalness, evidenced in his firm insistence to bring the ethnographer and the informants in "one world, i.e., the real world" (1992: 324). Here, we land squarely in the 'time of anthropology' and the entanglements of time in the enactment of power relations in the contemporary world. In this sense, we keep Fabian's (1983) observations firmly in focus combining them with Gell's (1992) polemic on the nature of allochronism. However, we extend the work of both authors beyond the realm of ethnographic practice into the worlds that ethnographies are set to analyse.

This volume sets out to trace different political technologies of allochronism. We argue that what characterises our common time (the time of anthropology and of its diverse sets of informants) is *chronocracy* and the ontological, epistemic, moral, discursive and practical uses of time that deny coevalness. Chronocracy thus underpins diverse social processes, often animated by affective sensibilities, that effect deeply asymmetrical relationships of exclusion and domination. This asymmetry might appear between humans (in diverse contexts) or indeed between humans and other organisms and our ecologies. In our effort to document experiences and practices of chronocracy and to chart its effects, we endorse Bear's call for an understanding of time through human labour (2014) and Das' observation that the "event attaches itself with its tentacles into everyday life and folds itself into the recesses of the ordinary" (2006: 1). Acts (or events) of chronocratic domination are occasions of disruption and structural violence that spread into the everyday lives of human and non-human beings and ecological systems. Chronocracy, we argue, becomes our 'everyday' and structures our ordinary experiences to the point that our common time thickens and becomes saturated with its effects and our labour to mitigate them.

This volume will offer a variety of ethnographic examples that illustrate our approach to time, power and chronocracy. Before we do this however, we would like to reassure the ancestral spirit of Alfred Gell that our thinking on this topic will remain "open-ended", "eclectic" and "empirical" (1992: 328). We read the anthropologists' efforts to understand time with a *flaneur* mindset, and we treat this volume as an act of labour – *another* act of labour – against chronocracy and its ordinary manifestations. In our work, we will use multiple and diverse tools, and it is to those tools that we turn now.

### Anthropological perspectives on time and temporality as instances of counter-chronocratic academic labour

Works by Gell and Munn published in 1992 were perhaps the first systematic attempts to discuss 'the abstract production of time and social reproduction' (Bear 2016: 488). Going beyond indigenous perspectives and understandings of time, these works explored the ways in which time is implicated in 'all aspects of social experience and practice' (Munn 1992: 93). As Hodges notes, Munn's approach combined a phenomenological view of time as temporality with inspirations from practice theory in order to draw our attention to embodied experiences of time as the effect of temporalising practices (2008: 405). Rather than focussing on the notion of abstract time as a backdrop of human activity, Munn argues in favour of the notion of temporalisation which suggests that time is continually 'produced' as a 'symbolic process' through everyday practices (1992: 116).

Temporalisation is of course far from a neutral process. Acts of temporalisation, as we have argued, can also be violent enactments of chronocracy in so far as various discursive and practical regimes can produce diverse temporalities and different social and symbolic timelines that deny coevalness to certain subjects. Among the primary fields where discussions of the chronocratic and hegemonic role of temporalising discourses intensified was that of historical anthropology. Hirsch and Stewart stressed the importance of the role of time in structuring human experience as an intersubjective phenomenon (2005: 262). Through the notion of historicity – a concept that goes back to the philosophies of Heidegger and Ricoeur – they examined the relationships we entertain with our pasts and argued against a rigid separation between the past, the present and the future (2005: 271, see also Ringel 2016b).

The Western paradigm of historicism, Stewart notes (namely the idea that the present succeeds the past in a strict and irreversible manner), is inexorably linked to hegemonic conceptualisations of progress and hierarchical distinctions between the past, the present and an ever better future that lies ahead (2016: 83–84). This idea is epitomised in historians' notion of colligation, the 'tying-together' of events into patterns that give rise to defined periods, such as ages or epochs and which are believed to succeed one another (Walsh 1951). In anthropology, for example, Lewis Henry Morgan, in an all-roads-lead-to-us kind of way, talked of an evolution from savagery to barbarism to civilisation. Consistent with the Eurocentrism of the time, such views placed non-Europeans, not just in a place which was outside of modernity but crucially for the arguments we make here, outside the time of modernity. Among others, this was JS Mills' take on global history which, as Dipesh Chakrabarty put it, 'thus consigned Indians, Africans and other "rude" nations to an imaginary waiting room of history' (2000: 8). This was chronocratic rule and a denial of coevalness *par excellence*.

Promoting an anti-historicist ethos of understanding temporal relations, Hirsch and Stewart (2005) draw our attention to how these different

temporal orders are not simply a thing of the past but can actually co-exist simultaneously in the present (cf. also Lambek 2002). The ways in which temporalities fuse together when 'segments of the past' remain 'contemporary, simultaneous and proximate' draws attention to the poly-temporal character of historical experience (Knight 2015; Knight and Stewart 2016: 5). Knight's ethnography of a town in central Greece, for instance, eloquently demonstrates how the past is relevant to everyday life (cf. Sutton 1998) but also how the past is actually re-lived in the present (2015).

The onset of the past into the present that causes temporalities to merge has been also examined through emphasis on affect (cf. Navaro-Yashin 2012), objects and materialities that operate not only as *lieux de mémoir*, but literally as embodiments of past lives, of our own and others (cf. Navaro-Yashin 2009, 2012 on Greek-Cypriot homes inhabited by Turkish Cypriots after the 1974 partition of the island; Bryant 2014 on the same topic of appropriation and redistribution of Greek Cypriot property; Pipyrou 2014 on second-hand clothes; Demetriou 2015 on the evaluation of loss, ruination and preservation through time, Sutton 2001 on food and also Hirsch and Spitzer 2010 among others). We view all such anthropological efforts to combat historicism by identifying the 'elastic' properties of time in indigenous discursive, practical and material instantiations of historicity (cf. Knight and Stewart 2016) as explicitly counter-chronocratic acts or else as instances of counter-chronocratic academic labour that seeks to mediate the effects of temporalisation as chronopolitical violence and to reinstate coevalness at different levels of analysis.

The temporalising effects of historical time as differentiated time, a facet of contemporary chronocracy, have been discussed in detail in the work of Koselleck (1985). By examining the period between 1500 and 1800, Koselleck argues that two distinct processes took place: the separation between natural time and historical time and the monopolisation of notions of the future by the state. These processes are intimately connected to the genesis of the concept of progress as a singular, future-oriented order, animated by ideas about direction and improvement (ibid.). From 1500 to 1800, Koselleck notes that there were steady efforts on behalf of states to banish all kinds of astrological and religiously inspired predictions of the future (1985: 16–17). Simultaneously, history became temporalised and detached itself from a naturally formed chronology (ibid.: 33). The result of the former processes was the production of future as an unknown entity that could only be negotiated through 'progress' instigated and engineered by human actors who took control – so to speak – of their timelines (Koselleck 1985: 17–18). The result of the latter process (the temporalisation of history) was the formulation of specific concepts of political and social revolution. Political revolution acquired an 'objective' and a telos: the 'social emancipation of all men' and the 'transformation of social structure' (1985: 48). Social revolution forced the 'writing off' of the past and fed itself singlehandedly from notions of the future (ibid.: 51). Progress emerged as a collective singular order (and

in its singular linguistic form – as opposed to progresses) towards the end of the eighteenth century, a period that heralded the divide between past and present, 'previous experience and coming expectation' (1985: 257).

The singularisation of history that Koselleck describes supported the emergence of a hegemonic, internally differentiated timeline characterised by a specific direction towards future horizons and imbued with expectations of progress as improvement of our existential, ethical, political and social conditions. Western historicism is then one of the building blocks of chronocracy, since this hegemonic timeline functions as a chronotope (cf. Bakhtin 1981): namely, as virtual space that "becomes charged and responsive to movements of time, plot and history" (ibid.: 84). Chronotopes are timescapes filled with tied and untied knots of narrative (Bakhtin 1981: 250), where the dimension of time becomes visible (Bear 2014: 7) and where time becomes spatialised. The hegemonic chronotope of periodised history and future-oriented understandings of progress is a manifestation of chronocracy because it is a timescape from which persons and communities can be *dis-located*. As suggested above, falling out of the place of modernity, progress, development and directional social evolution is of course one of the most salient forms of being denied coevalness. In turn, anthropological works that emphasise the existence of multiple temporalities (cf. Birth 2008; Nielsen 2014; Knight 2014) and manage to disturb the hegemonic ordering of time are examples of counter-chronocratic labour. We view them not as instances of 'obscurantist', 'anti-rational denunciations' of objective time (to remember Alfred Gell again, 1992: 328), but as distinctly decolonising efforts to challenge chronopolitical hegemonies, through epistemic and even scientific disobedience (cf. Mignolo 2009).

Of similar character to the efforts of historical anthropologists, mentioned thus far (only indicatively, since there are many–many others who cannot be meaningfully discussed in the space of an introduction), is the work of scholars who have tried to problematise notions of hope and future. Hope as a faculty of the imagination and as a process indexical to potentially realisable futures has been inspirationally explored by Ernst Bloch (1986). Based on concepts defined by Aristotle in Poetics, Bloch proclaimed that the "real is a process" of "mediation between present, unfinished past and above all possible future" (ibid.: 196). Aristotle argues in favour of a certain unity between reality and potentiality, *existing* matter and the *possibility of materialisation* of concrete forms (evident his concept of *dynamei on*, or what Bloch translates as *what-is-in-possibility*, 1986: 207). What is 'possible' for Aristotle (*dynaton*) is also real (*alithes*), and therefore it could be argued that the reality of the present is on a par with the realisability of the future.[1] It follows that actions completed (or actualised) and actions that remain yet unfinished in the realm of potentiality form a continuum filled with contingency. The continuity between potential and actual, also known as Aristotelian *entelechy*, allows us to claim that there can be no hard division between factual reality and the 'not yet' (cf. Bloch 1986: 201). The 'not

yet' is a characteristic of a vision of the real that incorporates both actuality and potentiality and destabilises hard distinctions between present and future temporalities (cf. also Crapanzano 2004: 14). Entelechy renders hope a kind of method that informs people's actions in the present (actuality) as these are underpinned by visions of an indeterminate future (potentiality) (cf. Munn 1992: 115; Miyazaki 2004, 2006; Simpson 2013).

The connections between hope and the indeterminacy of potentiality are carefully examined by Bryant and Knight who argue that hope can be seen as a dynamic process of becoming and of positive movement (2019: 157). Hope as a means of gazing at the present through the future is way of orienting the self within time (ibid.: 19, Hodges 2010: 125). The open-ended, indeterminate character of the future fills our present with a 'plethora of orientations' (Bryant and Knight 2019: 192) and affords us a certain temporal agency through 'tricking time' (Ringel 2016a). This kind of temporal agency springs from the contingencies of the everyday; it indicates that subjectification is an open-ended, unfinished, social, temporal and relational project (cf. Kirtsoglou 2004). We are constantly becoming within time, within unbounded temporalities where pasts, presents and futures bleed into each other. Our present is inhabited with many possible futures, that may or may not become our 'life projects', but always remain indexical of the immensity of life as an adventure (cf. Rapport 2017). Our futures are saturated with present projections, hopes and desires, while our pasts are constantly subjected to recursive and retro-causal readings. As Veena Das argues, our efforts to 'put together a life', often in the face of previous suffering and devastation, take place as "events are being carried forward and backward in time on the register of the everyday" (2006: 218, also 211, 215). Indeed, our temporal agency, so intimately connected with the potentiality of future becomings, is primarily exercised through ordinary, everyday actions.

However, the manner of this backward and forward movement is not merely a matter of agency. It is also governed by what we have begun to sketch out as contemporary chronocracies. In other words, entelechy (the continuity between actuality and potentiality) should not be mistaken for a soteriological exercise in volitionality. It is precisely in the confusion between the registers of the actual and the potential that we become locked in structures of waiting, delay and suspension (cf. Crapanzano 2004: 115; Baraitser 2017, Hage 2009). As Guyer has it, we become subjected to "the disciplines of a punctuated time that fills the gap between an instantaneous present and an altogether different, distant future" (cf. Guyer 2007). Through examples from other analyses of the temporality of lived economies (most notably: Ferguson's 1999 work on despair, Williams' 2004 work on debt and Roitman's 2005 observations on fiscal disobedience), Guyer has persuasively argued in favour of the connection between the religious time of fundamentalist Evangelical Christianity and the capitalist time of monetarist projection and prophesy (2007: 411). The future is being structured, Guyer argues, through "formal calendrics of financial debt and benefit, self-renewal as a citizen,

or insistent work schedules" (ibid.). Punctuated time, enacted mercilessly in audit cultures (Strathern 2000), structures of indebtedness (Han 2012), or liberal notions of self-governance (Lester 2017), empties futures (Dzenovska 2018) and produces feelings of nostalgia (Narotzky 2016) and exhaustion (Knight 2016). Under these conditions, hope should not be mistaken for a manifestation of potentiality. It becomes a coping mechanism (Berlant 2011; Narotzky and Besnier 2014; Bryant and Knight 2019: 154), a kind of deferral of the present into the future that dis-locates and dis-places social actors. It does not only deny them their coevalness but also the very sense of existing in some realistic and meaningful timeframe. This specific facet of chronocracy renders hope not a positive experience of immanence and potentiality but a timescape that functions as an appendix of reality. What cannot exist in real time (people, relations, aspirations) is forced to inhabit the chronotope of hope, that is, the hope that somewhere down the line there is a future capable of accommodating it. Hope as refuge from chronocracy is a bordered time-space inhabited by postponed dreams and palliative thoughts of populations configured as superfluous (such as migrants cf. Agier 2011, or the urban poor cf. Palomera 2014) or as predestined failures (Evans 2007).

The openness of future possibilities is further entangled with the violence of chronocracy in ways closely related to speed and movement. As Koselleck notes, 'delay' has become a 'key historical principle', employed both by conservative forces that wish to hold back movement and by progressive ones who want to accelerate it (1985: 257). The notion of speed as the organising temporal norm of modernity has been extensively discussed by Virilio who argued that geopolitical relations have been substituted by chronopolitical ones, which increasingly favour systems of 'instantaneous transmission' (1989, 1991: 16). The compression of time-space through cultures of speed and acceleration (cf. Dalsgaard and Nielsen 2013; Bear 2014: 3, 2016: 488; Ringel 2016a: 28; Baraitser 2017), in combination with technologies of communication, forces us to think of chronocracy in terms of a post-humanism as "a distributed property of the relations between people and things" (Ingold 2010; Bear 2014: 7; Yarrow 2015: 32). Rather than time-space compression, we may be seeing its distension.

Chronocracy, as effected (paradoxically) through 'real-time' connectedness, is radically re-ordering the politics of allochronism. Virilio notes the emergence of global 'metacities' (2000: 11) 'hyper connected' between each other through points of communication but also through terminals of control and surveillance that exchange data and information in real time (2005: 95). These global metacities have changed the rules of non-coevalness from historical/spatial (developed versus developing countries) to virtual (Virilio 2005). As James notes, at the same time that some people "labour in the fields, factories, sweatshops and mines of the former colonial centres… the elites of those same countries work in digitally connected and Western-style urban districts… often situated in close proximity to makeshift slums or shanty towns" (2007: 100).

Virilio's observations regarding the tyranny of real time (1993: 283) offer significant insights to our understanding of time, chronocracy and lack of coevalness. The present afforded by post-industrial modernity is not an order that can be conceptualised in terms of abstract, mathematical (or 'natural') time. Any physicist located in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on April 24, 2013, just before the collapse of a sweatshop that cost the lives of more than one thousand people, would have assured us that all workers there lived in the same timeline with high-end traders at the Dhaka stock-exchange building (for example). The same is of course true for the case of London on the day of the Grenfell tower fire, and Lesbos, Greece, in 2015, when Syrian refugees were losing their lives just off the shores where European tourists were enjoying their all-inclusive holidays. Yet we know that this kind of 'contemporaneity' is very much meaningless. Living in the same clock-time, or even in the same broad space in terms of physical geography, means very little in terms of inhabiting a common, coeval present. We live in a fragmented world composed of timescapes of modern versus backward, and primitive versus advanced, underpinned by historical concepts of progress, growth and development (Agnew 1996: 31–32). This is a new kind of orientalism (cf. Kirtsoglou 2010a; Kirtsoglou and Tsimouris 2016) and one that sustains non-congruent worlds and produces neo-colonial subjects. The neo- and crypto-colonised are forced to live in the timelines of others (cf. Herzfeld 2002). Their own timelines are being rendered meaningless as they are caught in webs of capital circulation and accumulation and in the speed cultures of growth, excellence, debt and structural adjustment at the height of post-industrialised modernity.

Chronocracy – all those economic, political, historical forces that keep people in different timescapes – makes even more sense through the Aristotelian distinction between *zoe* (unqualified bare life) and *bios* (social life embedded in the body politic) as exemplified through the writings of Arendt (1958) and later Agamben (1998). Our *zoe* (or *zoes* in plural) may be unfolding in the same mathematical time but our *bios* (or *bioi* in plural) is not. Temporality, as an order, allows us to grasp the distinction between where we live our *zoe* and where we experience (or become stripped of) our *bios*. Past, present and future need to be understood therefore not as social elaborations of the before and after of mathematical time but as timescapes of the political, produced by different chronocratic regimes.

### Another look at conceptualisations of time and their consequences for the concept of chronocracy

Our efforts to explicate and contextualise the notion of chronocracy is in line with the considerable academic labour that has gone into recording the global manifestations of what Bear calls the heterochrony of our time (2014: 6). Our fundamental contention is that the workings of chronocracy force certain people to live in different timelines *from* others, or obliges them to

live in the timelines *of* others, or ostracises them from all meaningful time-lines confining them to the chronotope of hope as a coping mechanism and a refuge from the present.

We would now like to invite the reader to take another look at our opening quotation from Newton's Principia Mathematica while trying to mentally 'zoom in' to the world in 1687, the time of Principia's publication. Native Americans had already been decimated, the transatlantic slave-trade was well established, and in Stuart Britain (1603–1714), the majority of people lived in extreme poverty, many relying on charity to survive (cf. Zuvich 2016). The 1666 great fire of London had already happened and we are only a year away from the Glorious Revolution which transformed Britain into a commercial society with the foundation of the Bank of England in 1694 (cf. Wennerlind 2011).

Isaac Newton was living in the timescape of Trinity College, Cambridge, and it is from there, sometime between 1665 and 1667, that he wrote the scholium in question. In just a few words, Newton draws a hard line between absolute, true time and vulgar time, proclaiming that *the vulgar conceive [the quantities of time, space, place and motion] only from the relation they bear to sensible objects.* In Newton's scholium, vulgar people (i.e. ordinary, com-mon people) acquire their own separate timeline, that is, the 'vulgar time', which (as opposed to true time) is relative and measured by motion. On that summer day when Isaac Newton signed the Principia, he sealed the distinc-tion between mathematical 'objective' time and the time of subjective expe-rience. He also, willingly or unwillingly, constructed a specific chronotope out of the combination of 'vulgar time' and 'vulgar people' who were thus produced as a class distinct from scientists but not just in social, economic, or historical terms. Because the vulgar could *only conceive* time *relationally*, their difference from the likes of Isaac Newton is seen as being primarily a *cognitive* one. The vulgar were not only traded as slaves, killed, annihilated by wars and disease, or destined to live in poverty. They were also constituted as *cognitively different* to certain other classes of their contemporaries, and they were denied coevalness with them precisely on the basis of a cognitive difference read as a legitimated inferiority. Nothing less than the foundation stones of the waiting room of history were laid in Newton's Principia.

We now invite the reader to fast-forward 304 years later, when (presumably at his office on the third floor of Connaught House at the LSE) Alfred Gell is writing *The Anthropology of Time*. Drawing on the late nineteenth-century British philosopher of time, John McTaggart (1927), Gell distin-guishes B-series time from A-series time. B-series time corresponds to the 'real' nature of scientific time, it lacks tenses and is characterised only by a binary distinction between 'before' versus 'after'. For example, ASA 2015 happened before ASA 2016. A-series on the other hand, reflects subjective time-consciousness and is organised in past, present and future (1992: 157). The ASA conference we organised which was experienced as in the present in 2016 is now in the past. The absolute, objective time of the B-series, exists

independently from the subjective personal or collective experience of time of the A-series. Our perceptions of time do not change in any way as we flip between these two ways of apprehending time, Gell argues (ibid.: 158). Yet, as Hodges notes, Gell's B-series is a 'metaphysical statement' about real time, the order that provides "an objective ground for, and structure to, the world and its history" (2008: 406).

The model of A- versus B-series of time which Gell drew up is in many ways reminiscent of the Newtonian distinction between subjective and objective time presented in the Principia. Unlike Newton however, Gell was an anthropologist, which means that he probably shared most anthropologists' allergic reaction to vulgar allochronism. Thus, his distinction between objective and subjective time is complemented with an analytically robust case in favour of the idea that all human beings, all people, have the capacity to conceptualise time in *both* its objective and subjective manifestations. This is because, as a matter of logical principle Gell argues, all actions carry opportunity costs that are understood by all agents who are forced to perform one action at the expense of another (1992: 216–218, 322). We all inhabit the 'real world', Gell concludes, because we all understand that we cannot both perform and at the same time not perform the same action (1992: 323).

Apart from arguing a persuasive case against allochronism and cognitive difference as inferiority, Gell goes on to explain *how* we conceptualise these two different series of time. A-series subjective time is understood, he states, as a flux of images (1992: 236), through which we "interact with 'real' time via the mediation of temporal maps (ibid.: 239). This is because the temporal territory of objective, B-series time, is inaccessible to us since "physically speaking, each one of us is only another smear of events" that belong to the same category as the B-series events that we want to grasp (1992: 239). In this sense, 'time is us' (ibid.). The temporal maps we construct in order to navigate B-time are only representations, surrogates and reconstructions of a real, and otherwise, *noumenal* time (1992: 235–240).

Gell's assertion that 'time is us' goes a step beyond counter-allochronism to turning cognitive hierarchical categorisations between communities, societies and individuals on their head. Our (hopefully fresh) reading of his work suggests that his A- and B-series time and his notion of temporal maps do not just categorically preclude the existence of a class of people who only live in 'vulgar' chronotopes where objective time is confused with our representations of it. More importantly, the accessibility of B-series time only through temporal maps persuasively demonstrates that there exists no cognitively superior class of people who can step outside objective time (or spacetime after Einsteinian physics) in order to have unmediated access to the phenomenon as a fundamental quantity. It transpires that *we all* access (space)time through temporal maps and other representational techniques such as mathematical models and two-dimensional diagrams, which employ shading in order to create the illusion of a four-dimensional continuum in visual representations. The notion of temporal maps is therefore exegetic

but also indexical to our common cognitive capacities and limitations, and as such, it is a deeply revolutionary anti-chronocratic concept.

Bear (2014, 2016) builds on the concept of time-maps in order to draw our attention to their economic, bureaucratic, social and political uses. She pinpoints the existence of diverse representations and rhythms of human and non-human time (2014: 6) and the hierarchical ordering of time-maps within society (ibid.: 17). Echoing Althusser, she observes that there is a 'dislocation' of different temporalities produced at different structural levels (2014: 19) and proposes that we begin to understand time as 'labour' (ibid.: 6). We have fully endorsed this proposition here as we appreciate the fact that in its conceptual and practical qualities, labour manages to assemble together temporal agency, but also our creativity in striving to mediate and reconcile temporal disparities (1992: 20).

Elaborating further on the concept of time-maps and based on the Aristotelian distinction between techne (technique), episteme (knowledge) and phroneses (ethics), Bear claims that our actions, techniques, knowledges and ethics of time have poetic qualities, as they skilfully produce social worlds and connect them with 'nonhuman processes' (2016: 489–490). What we find particularly useful here for putting together the puzzle of chronocracy is Bear's observation that in capitalist modernity, the techniques, knowledge and ethics of time form into assemblages of dominant and less dominant time-maps in technologies of imagination (ibid.: 496). We use this insight to argue that chronocracy depends on hierarchically ordered assemblages to produce disparate affordances of the social and the political. Chronocracy, as we have identified it here, maps closely onto Bear's varieties of temporal representation. Chronocracy as a technology produces 'spatiotemporal inequality' through the accumulation of different orders of capital (2016: 496). As a 'hierarchy of expertise' (ibid.), chronocracy creates allochronisms, while as an ethic it can produce asymmetrical moral economies inspired by neoliberal visions of progress as a historical and moral telos.

## Studies in contemporary chronopolitics: documenting and mediating chronocracy

Our exploration in contemporary chronocracy opens with Michael Jackson's essay on *existential mobility and multiple selves*. Jackson bases his analysis on life stories of African migrants collected during several years of fieldwork in London, Amsterdam and Copenhagen. Accessing worlds through the window afforded by a single life is an established method in anthropology and specifically in relation to the anthropology of time. Irving, for example, offers the notion of 'life journeys' in which he combines physical movement in space, maps and narrative. He eloquently exemplifies not only the indeterminacy of the future but also the thickness and complexity of our temporalities as these are subject to constant reinterpretations and recursive readings (2017: 27–28 also see 2016).

Jackson's method here does not involve physical movement or time-maps but produces equally rich evidence of our poly-spatio-temporal existence; the self appears as 'several rather than singular'. Thus, we are allowed a glimpse into the life story of Ibrahim from Burkina Faso. Ibrahim moved from West Africa to Holland and consequently from a patrimonial regime where his destiny was determined by face to face relationships to a bureaucratic regime of governance through impersonal structures. Jackson tells how Ibrahim had a photo of his father prominently hanging on a wall of his room, but every time he was consuming alcohol he felt like running out of the room, not being able to stand his father's gaze. The point is a powerful one. Ibrahim may have moved places and thereby become 'dis-membered' from his familiar community, but he still inhabited the temporality of his homeland, immanent in his father's gaze. As Jackson notes, Ibrahim oscillated between a concern for his father's expectations, his wife and daughter in Holland and his personal ambition to become educated. Ibrahim's story illustrates a kind of poly-spatio-temporality. It is filled with past, intimate, religious and kinship time (cf. Cannell and McKinnon 2013; Bear 2014), present, kinship and social time and future orientations of hope and ambition. Ibrahim's experience attests to Gell's claim that 'each one of us is only another smear of events' (1992: 239).

Jackson's contribution demonstrates how the poly-spatio-temporality as an existential condition produces multiple selves, full of discontinuities stemming from the imperative to navigate opportunity costs (cf. Gell 1992) and the ethical dilemmas of becoming (cf. Das 2006: 76–77).

Jackson's essay also offers an empirical and analytical substantiation of chronocracy and what it means for people to try to bridge incongruent temporalities. At the empirical level, we can see how the migrant is being dis-located from the timeline of the full citizen and forced to inhabit an 'inscrutable and Kafkaesque world' of bureaucratic indifference, locked into structures of waiting that he attempts to mediate though hope and anticipation. 'The migrant is obliged to re-member himself like a bricoleur', Jackson notes, and through acts of skilful labour he morphs into a new assemblage 'from the various aspects of his past and present selves' (cf. Bear 2016: 489–490).

Jackson also speaks directly to chronocracy in its epistemic form. He draws a parallel between the culturalist reduction of reality to 'preconceived ontological categories' (cf. Gell 1992), and the racist reduction of a whole person to the colour of his skin, religion, nationality or history. By stressing the human capacity for 'strategic shape-shifting' and the 'existential imperative to discover and create one's own ground', Jackson reminds us of the humanistic anthropology of Rapport (2012, 2017 indicatively).

The epistemic face of chronocracy is also taken up in the second contribution offered by Peter Wade who addresses the spatio-temporal narratives of human population genomics. What Wade gives us is a powerful example of how chronocracy is productive of new concepts and 'superior

truths' in the form of expert of knowledges that temporalise human history and action (cf. Koselleck 1985: 257). Human evolution, Wade explains, is chiefly represented by two kinds of scientific narratives: the spatiotemporal genealogical tree that supports the 'out of Africa' theory and the net/rhizome model adopted by multiregional theory. Through an arborial metaphor of branches that shoot out from each other, the tree metaphor presents a vision of 'human unity in diversity'. The idea of genetic unity, Wade observes, entails a certain anti-racist orientation in its emphasis on our common origins (from the trunk of the tree), and yet it also recognises and geneticises racial difference between continental populations (represented as separate branches). Through the image of the tree, population genomic science constructs a theory of evolution 'in which human populations developed in specific, continent-sized environmental niches, through natural selection and endogamy'. Apart from reducing reality to representation (cf. also Jackson this volume), the way that the tree image spatialises and temporalises human difference is associated, Wade argues, with 'linearity, hierarchy, racism and rigidity'.

The net/rhizome model is heavily influenced by the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987). This image affords a temporal and political representation that traces unity in 'constant flows across space and time' (Wade this volume; cf. Hodges 2008, 2010). Multiregional theory, Wade notes, allows for the 're-imaging of evolution in post-Darwinian terms as a rhizome of life' and offers a much 'less reified concept of the population'. The tree image, on the other hand, constitutes an epistemic chronocracy, effected through the temporalisation of human movement across time. Similarly, the academic labour invested to compose an alternative, rhizomic representation of evolution as a 'heterogenous mass of connections' (Wade this volume) is an obvious counter-chronocratic act. Apart from speaking so closely to the concept of chronocracy, Wade's chapter also offers an example of how scientists too are forced to work with B-series-type *representations* of 'real' time (cf. Gell 1992). Both the tree and the rhizome are effectively temporal maps, constructions of the passage of time and of movement across space. In this sense, Wade's contribution can be also read as an explicit attack on scientific/epistemic allochronism and its effects on debates about race and genetics.

Moving on from epistemic chronocracy into chronocracy as an institutional technology, Laszczkowski provides us with a view of the role of affect, indeterminacy and entelechy in the conflict between incongruent timescapes. The ethnography is situated in La Maddalena, west of Turin, where potentially lethal, carcinogenic asbestos was released during a tunnel construction. Laszczkowski demonstrates the institutional way of dealing with the risk of disease and death by reformulating it through the use of statistics and legal regulations regarding 'concentration limits'. Just as the author establishes the biopolitical (and potentially thanatopolitical) effects of governmentality on the body, he also traces contradictions

inherent in the workings of the state. Through documenting the work of activists in transforming risk from a 'numerical value into a virtual, yet concrete, embodied reality', Laszczkowski elaborates on the continuities between the virtual and the actual (cf. Hodges 2008: 410). Following the works of Mitchell (1999) and Harvey (2005), the chapter articulates an argument about the state as 'a network of overlapping apparatuses' and 'a volatile and contingent effect of loosely coordinated practices and discourses'.

This chapter resonates with works on the contested temporalities of urban planning (cf. Abram and Weszkalnys 2013), environmental politics (Mathews and Barnes 2016), anthropologies of affect (cf. Navaro-Yashin 2012; Laszczkowski and Reeves 2017) and on the relationship between materiality and temporality (cf. Bryant 2014). In terms of the concept of chronocracy, Laszczkowski's contribution evidences the chronocratic character of governmentality, as this transpires through its biopolitical and thanatopolitical authority. The 'loosely coordinated practices and discourses' and the affective tensions through which the state materialises are saturated with chronocratic capacities. Manifestations of the state fill futures with fantasies of development, but also with the possibility of destruction and death (cf. Pink and Salazar 2017: 18). The case of La Maddalena reminds us of Das' observation on how "cosmologies of the powerless hold… the sheer contingency of events responsible for the disorder of their lives" (1995: 139). Although the potentially lethal effects of asbestos will be experienced at the level of individual bodies, "those bodies bear the stamp of the authority of society upon the docile bodies of its members" (ibid.: 138). Laszczkowski's contribution showcases how chronocracy is sometimes located in "decision events" (Humphrey 2008: 374 in Knight and Stewart 2016: 10) that create asymmetrical timelines between decision-makers and those who are forced to bear the consequences of other people's decisions (see also Kirtsoglou, Widger and Wickramasinghe in this volume). In carefully pointing out ruptures, tensions and moments of indeterminacy where the state is 'both materialised and undone', Laszczkowski too engages in counter-chronocratic academic labour that charts the conditions and effects of institutional ways of producing non-coeval timescapes.

The theme of contested temporalities of urban planning is further explored in Ringel's paper on the relationship between expectations and politics in the urban settings of the post-industrial era (cf. Abram 2014, 2017). The ethnography tells us about the German city of Bremerhaven, which after a period of industrial development fell into economic decline, high unemployment and increasing poverty. Following the reception of investment funding from the Federal level, officials and citizens opted for economic diversification and invested into turning the harbour city into a tourist space. The 'catchword' of the city's strategies was 'sustainability', and, as Ringel astutely points out, in the context of the post-industrial era, 'sustainability has itself to be sustained'.

Ringel's paper demonstrates that infrastructures 'establish temporal sensitivities and common rhythms through which life should be lived and understood' (Widger & Wickramasinghe this volume; cf. also Dalakoglou 2010; Reeves 2016). His chapter discusses the relationship between politics and expectations as these literally materialise in urban infrastructural transformations as future-oriented events that have the capacity to structure everyday lives (cf. Guyer 2007). Elaborating on the recent work of Dzenovska and De Genova (2018), Ringel notes how political action enacts visions of the future as 'progress' which is, in turn, evidenced by change. However, the work of maintenance and continuity, he argues, is a 'radical political act'. Ringel contrasts local German efforts to maintain, to sustain and to repair with 'anthropology's urge for change'. His observations on the connection between 'change' and hierarchical ideas of progress as telos remind us of Navaro-Yashin's argument on the politics of knowledge production (2009). Echoing Kuhn's (1970) work on how scientific revolutions and 'paradigm shifts' are characterised by a tendency to "associate progress in knowledge with the defeat of previous frameworks", Navaro-Yashin notes that innovation in knowledge is related to "the ruination of past approaches" (2009: 7).

Anthropological analyses of chronopolitics, Ringel rightly argues, need to keep a firm focus on the question of 'whose times and whose politics are we talking about'. He further draws our attention to state-led and institutional ways of addressing incongruent temporalities through investment: a chronocratic notion expectant with ideas of change as progress. As Kirtsoglou (this volume) also demonstrates, a city, a country or a community is chronocratically deemed (or shall we say 'diagnosed') as existing in a different timescape at the very moment that financial support is provided to it in order for it to overcome its purported economic and structural lag. Investing (and lending) is thus a form of financial chronocracy that forces communities to accept their heterochronic existence and imposes on them all sorts of political and ethical dilemmas of how they are supposed to remedy their condition. In the ethnographic case of Germany examined in Ringel's chapter, officials and citizens struggle with chronocracy through the potentially anti-chronocratic vision of sustainability and maintenance and a 'certain stubborn clinging to and investment in old forms' (Ringel in this volume). The connection of academic narratives of excellence and innovation with chronocratic acts of ruination of older forms of knowledge is the second important insight into the political and epistemic facets of chronocracy that this chapter offers. Speaking to emerging literatures on 'slowing down' (cf. Pink and Lewis 2014; Bowles 2016), Ringel's contribution is a direct call for political and academic labour against the effects of chronocracy as speed, progress and change.

Slowing-down, waiting and enduring as explicit forms of counter-chronocracy are examined in the work of Salisbury and Baraitser's chapter on psychoanalytic care. The authors examine the implications of a particular strand of phenomenological psychiatry in the formulation of

psychoanalytic chronic time that attempts to mediate modern speed-cultures (cf. Virilio 2005). In a pointed and theoretically nuanced analysis, Salisbury and Baraitser demonstrate how melancholia and depression have come to be understood through particular imaginaries of modernity as stagnation and suspension. The chapter offers extremely useful insights to our discussion of chronocracy and waiting, as it illuminates the affirmative dimensions of waiting that our approach has thus far sorely missed. The arguments presented here remind us of Koselleck's observation (discussed earlier, 1985: 10–11, 16–17) that the abandonment of predictive and eschato-logical narratives (between 1500 and 1800) led to state-controlled concepts of the future and the emergence of the notion of unidirectional progress. Medieval messianic waiting, Salisbury and Baraitser note, was a form of 'protracted immanence' that structured waiting 'leading to its implicit value in eschatological time'. The gradual retreat of messianic waiting in modernity, and the radically different conceptualisations of future as progress and accelerated time that emerged, "abbreviated the space of experiences [and] robbed them of their constancy" (Koselleck 1985: 17). As Salisbury and Baraitser pointedly observe, chronocratic historical processes associated with the era of modernity foster an idiom of 'waiting *for*, rather than waiting *with* time'. The chronicity of psychic life and the timelessness of the unconscious were thus seen by Freud as a kind of 'absence of time'. The psychoanalytic approach that the authors explicate however nurtures a notion of chronic time that renders prolonged waiting a healing, restorative and indeed counter-chronocratic experience. In this sense, the chapter not only speaks directly to the main concept of the volume but also adjusts, improves and enriches our understandings of waiting and delay.

Moving from the timelessness and the chronicity of psychic life onto 'timeliness', agricultural constraints, management strategies and climatic forces, we will now examine Widger and Wickramasinghe's paper. Significantly, this chapter offers insights on the workings of chronocracy in development contexts and a much-welcome ethnographic move from European settings to Sri Lanka. Their focus is the Mahaweli Development and Irrigation Project (MDIP), a non-urban, non-industrial kind of infrastructure which exposes the limited applicability of theoretical engagements with (post)modern time (itself a restricted ecology) for our understandings of 'anthropogenic climate change' and 'expansive ecologies of time'. The MDIP project, 'rooted in a modernist concept of industrial time' did not manage to map successfully onto local agricultural rhythms and their specific irrigation needs. Its attempts to 'discipline peasant farmers to work within the demands of intensified agricultural production' by controlling the tempo of irrigational infrastructures were only partly successful. But while MDIP schedulers saw Mahaweli farmers as 'quite literally *falling out of time*' (original emphasis), the authors suggest that "the *part-time* modernity of the Mahaweli is not indicative of a failed attempt to impose a *full-time* modernity", but a 'physico-temporal representation' of how water

and fertilisers coincided. Widger and Wickramasinghe view chemical fertilisers as 'hyper-objects', namely entities with temporal dimensions that protrude into human consciousness. The assemblage of agricultural temporalities and environments, local habits, rhythms and hyper-objects such as chemical fertilisers, produces an 'expansive ecological time', which, the authors argue, cannot be captured by the restricted ecology of modern and post-modern time fostered by the MDIP project.

Based on a discussion of Gell (1992), Bear (2014), Elias (1994) and Morton (2013) among others, the chapter offers novel perspectives on ecological processes, agricultural (non-urban) infrastructures and the temporality of ecological time. Alongside the chapter by Irvine which follows, Widger and Wickramasinghe enrich our understandings of chronocracy as a process that involves human and non-human beings, objects (hyper- and otherwise), materialities and ecologies. The manner in which the MDIP project constitutes local farmers and their environments as being in need of modernisation is reminiscent of the kind of denial of coevalness inherent in discourses and practices of urban development, investment and lending (see also Ringel's and Kirtsoglou's contributions). As these narratives (and the structural adjustment projects within which they materialise) supposedly seek to reconcile incongruent temporalities, they actually *impose* a certain modern, industrial and post-industrial vision of synchronicity that effectively denies coevalness at the most fundamental level.

The ways in which chronocracy produces asymmetrical relationships between humans and other organisms become even more profound in Irvine's paper on the life-cycle of peats. In this contribution, the eco-cidal effects of denying coevalness to non-human organisms and ecological systems are laid bare. Irvine's ethnography explains how peats are assemblages of living and decomposed matter that occupy a state in-between wet and dry, living and dying, growing and ancient. Peats have their own physical and biological rhythms and life-cycles that become connected to the social rhythms and labour of people who use peat matter to produce heating bricks. As land gets drained for cultivation, however, its water is lost leading to the exposure of the formerly waterlogged peat to the air. "As water is withdrawn from a body of peat and air fills the spaces in it…chemical oxidations…bacterial and fungal attacks" kill the organic parts of the peat, effecting the loss of a form of natural habitat and the interruption of ecological time (Godwin 1978: 126 in Irvine this volume).

Irvine's ethnography contributes greatly to our understanding of multi-temporality as a distributed property of the relations between human and non-human organisms and between ecologies and materialities. His contribution exposes chronocratic transformations of our ecosystems that establish temporal incongruence between human and non-human temporal rhythms. In a sense, Irvine gives us a bite-size insight into the enormity of the destructive workings of chronocracy in the Anthropocene. The view of ecological temporalities as fundamentally different and inferior to human

ones allows us to see chronocracy as a form of environmental colonialism. Attempts to dominate ecological time afford sedimentations of colonial practices (cf. Stoller 2016) and comprise a type of chronocracy that effects the ruination, destruction and necrosis of our environments and of non-human organisms. Irvine's ethnographic engagement with this issue is a piece of significant academic counter-chronocratic labour that exposes the deleterious effects of the chronopolitics of non-coevalness for environmental systems and ultimately for the humans that live in them.

Returning to the theme of post-industrial, hegemonic visions of synchronicity underpinned by notions of modernity as progress, the penultimate ethnographic contribution to the volume explores modernity as a historical product that encompasses multiple and seemingly contradictory fragments of European history, namely the protestant ethic, Aristotelian logic and an eschatological trust in progress as unavoidable telos. Through an ethnographic exploration of austerity in Greece, Kirtsoglou identifies crisis as a chronocratic technique that serves to produce and normalise temporal incongruence. Notions of crisis and emergency underpin austerity measures and structural adjustments that citizens have to endure in order to overcome the financial crisis through modernisation. Synchronicity as modernisation becomes a moral imperative which produces 'anticipatory nostalgia' (cf. Herzfeld 1997; Berliner 2015; Theodossopoulos 2016b and this volume). Anticipatory nostalgia in Greece highlights the nation's glorious classical past and simultaneously takes the form of a longing for a comparably outstanding future that is yet to come. This view of the nation as the cradle of the principles of modernity (through its heritage) and at once as lagging in modernisation constitutes the present as a ruinated timescape, a sad and parochial, collectively mourned parenthesis.

This contribution demonstrates how chronocracy is implicated in structures and formal calendrics of debt (cf. Williams 2004; Guyer 2007; Han 2012) and how it produces the phenomena of ruination (Navaro-Yashin 2102), loss (Demetriou 2018) and exhaustion (Knight 2016; Bryant and Knight 2019). In the specific case of Greece, chronocratic narratives of temporal incongruence accentuate the politics of nostalgia through the circulation of aetiologies that emphasised the degenerate character of modern Greeks. The painful austerity measures imposed on the country became the vehicle that would transport the Greek people simultaneously back (in the glory of their classical heritage) *and* forward (in the much desired state of being modern). Austerity left the country in a normalised state of emergency. In this liminal chronotope, modern Greeks continue to stand – as if in the antechambers of history or possibly a newly fashioned 'waiting room' – while their future progress (and their future as progress) is politically engineered by international institutional actors making critical decisions at the margins of the state (cf. Das 1995; Knight and Stewart 2016: 10 and our earlier discussion of Laszczkowski's contribution). Apart from evidencing the role of chronocracy in fostering relations of inequality and exploitation,

Kirtsoglou also documents grassroots counter-chronocratic acts of fiscal disobedience (cf. Roitman 2005) and the role of affect in the chronopolitics of (lack of) coevalness.

The theme of nostalgia and its relations to allochronism is also elucidated in the contribution offered by Theodossopoulos, which brings our discussion full circle. Through an astute critique of ethnographic practice, the author explains the workings of 'ethnographic nostalgia' and contributes to long-standing methodological debates on allochronism in the social sciences (cf. Agnew 1996; Klinke 2013; Pandian 2012; Stewart 2016 indicatively). Theodossopoulos defines ethnographic nostalgia as an analytical concept that 'structures the effect of previous ethnographic knowledge on ethnographic production in the present' (cf. Theodossopoulos 2016a, 2016b). He attests to the multi-temporal, intertextual character of ethnography, but he also demonstrates how ethnographies become temporalised and turn into 'informative' and 'authoritative' records that pre-empt ethnographic futures and fill them with all sorts of distortions and allochronic biases. This contribution facilitates further our understanding of epistemic chronocracy, both through a fresh reading of allochronism as an effect of ethnographic nostalgia and through a careful deconstruction of what constitutes progress in anthropological writing – turns which are in fact returns (cf. Navaro-Yashin 2009: 7 and our earlier discussion of Ringel's contribution). The crisis of representation, Theodossopoulos argues, created – against our better judgement – an allochronic trap: 'it has temporalized its critical age', relocating the problem of representation in past timelines supposedly closed hermetically from our own. The assumption that methodological problems, once identified, can be fixed and become a thing of the past leaves the back door wide open to allochronism as epistemic chronocracy. In combination with Jackson's paper, our introduction and the insights that Ringel offers on change, this contribution speaks to wider debates on the structuring effects of regimes of expert knowledge (cf. Koselleck 1985; Klinke 2013; Bear 2016; Yarrow 2017) and comprises the methodological contribution of this volume to current literatures on the anthropology of time.

### *Just before we pass the torch…*

Endorsing Bear's (2016) useful categorisation of the varieties of temporal representations, we have demonstrated that chronocracy manifests itself in economico-political technologies of instituting inequality around the world, in epistemic hierarchies of knowledge that have allochronic effects, and as a counter-ethic that creates asymmetrical moral economies. We have argued that chronocracy can be animated by affect; it is built into practices and materialities; it is productive not only of new concepts and superior truths but also of biopolitical, thanatopolitical and eco-cidal processes of governance. We proposed that we can view chronocracy as a temporal adaptation of the distinction between *zoe* as bare life, collectively lived in the same 'real'

time, and *bios* as social and political existence that has been subjected to hierarchical temporalisation. The world, we have claimed, has become a fragmented place; not only in historical, economic, political and geopolitical ways but also, perhaps more crucially, in a temporal sense. Temporal incongruence is a central problem of our time as it creates multiple tensions and asynchronicities between open-ended and circumscribed views of the world. In all of its political, epistemic and moral manifestations and in its discursive, practical, affective and material facets, chronocracy produces and underpins the diverse non-coeval timescapes we inhabit. Spatiotemporal asymmetries between these timescapes force people to live in the timelines of others, or worse, to inhabit various appendices of time, locked in structures of waiting *for*, and in postponed presents.

Inspired by Veena Das' (2006) work, we have observed that chronocracy has scalar properties, and as anthropologists, we are best equipped to study it through a descent into the everyday and the ordinary. This is because, as all other forms of violence, chronocracy saturates our everyday existence, and from there, it is capable of fleshing out the sinister side of our most positive faculties like imagination, creativity, potentiality, immanence and agency. When chronocracy becomes imaginative it finds all sorts of new and creative ways of planting itself in our worlds. It turns potentiality and immanence into insecurity, it converts endurance and maintenance into stagnation, it adjusts development and growth into tyrannical structures of accumulation, exploitation and ecologic destruction, it makes hope feel like a waiting room. Hijacked by chronocracy, hope becomes a timescape composed of the ruins of our present, of our dead dreams and of closed-off possibilities that may one day re-open. Who knows when and how? We must be wary of chronocracy we claim; not only because we so often stumble on it and fall flat on our faces but also because of its intimate connection to our own agency. Time is us (to remember Gell) and chronocracy is our affective, historical, political and epistemic counter-morality. It is an example of the dark side of our radical imagination (cf. Kirtsoglou 2010b, 2011, 2018); of our immense potential to transform but also to dis-locate, to corrupt and to colonise our own existence and the existence of other species and of our ecologies in all kinds of ways (as human beings we individually and collectively come up with all sorts of ethical and affirmative, but also violent and damaging customs!).

In some ways, this volume is about temporal dis-locations and the re-location of human and non-human beings in coeval spatiotemporal ecologies. What would a decolonising ethical orientation to this denial of coevalness look like? We have tried to show that the synchronicity of modernity is not the place to begin but rather a more fundamental belief in the temporal and political equality of diverse ontologies. This is, of course, no easy matter. It is not even a matter of writing an academic piece of work but a problem that requires continuous and hard labour at all levels of life. The present collection is an exercise in multi-temporal inter-textuality. As

such, it is filled with ancestral guiding spirits, the echoes of a conference past, the hard work of other anthropologists and that of its contributors, anticipations of a less chronocratic future and hopes that it does not itself become somehow part of chronocracy. Ultimately, it is just another act of academic labour, another turn of Archimedes' screw and another bead on the string which is the time of anthropology. We offer it in good heart and in full knowledge that, despite our best intentions, it will not solve the fundamental problem it identifies. If we don't have better answers we hope that at least we have come up with better questions.

## Note

1  See Aristotle, *Περί Ψυχής*, Athens: Fexis, 1911 edition.

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