Time's Calling: Time, Timing, and Transformation in Futures Work

SAGE

Marcus Bussey[1]

Abstract

Futurists work with time, yet we rarely consider the full implications of what this means. It could equally be said that futurists work within time, navigating the cultures and ecologies of time that shape the worlds they seek to enable. The most interesting result of this way of looking at what futurists do, with and within time, is that it opens up a space for human action that is creative and reflexive. Futurists work with time not because their work concerns the future but because they are interested in change. Change is the work of heads, hands, and hearts over time. It is the result of both accident and intention and dominates our experience of Modernity. The futurist enters a change-context to help individuals, organizations, and communities enhance their adaptive potential. This paper works with thinking about time from a futures perspective. My goal is to drill down into the temporal inventiveness of futures work by dwelling on the linguistic and conceptual aspects of temporal discourse. What really interests me in this is how futurists can leverage a variety of temporal concepts to better achieve their goal of making elements of time, timing, and transformation explicit to their clients and students.

Keywords

temporality, chronotope, narrative, kairos, macrohistory, chronophobia, timing, optimism

Futurists are disturbers of the peace. As they work with organizations, businesses, community groups, students, and individuals—or even as they sit at their desks and reflect on such engagements—they are seeking to disrupt dominant assumptions about the lifeworld and to expose and explore possible new pathways to futures previously denied or discounted. This quest for alternative futures involves working with people's understandings of time and timing. As most people assume time to be linear, futurists often begin by challenging this assumption and offering alternative models of temporality drawn from other cultures, other eras, and also from the sciences. Indigenous "Dream Time" for instance points to a folded pre-modern model of time that is almost "outside of time" as understood by societies nurtured by the Judeo-Christian temporality that is expectant of a "Second Coming" and

therefore essentially linear in nature (Fabian 1983; Perkins 1998).

Both Dream Time and Judeo-Christian time are models that are, to a large extent, incommensurable. The former is folded, or perhaps "circular," while the latter is linear and urgent. Both suggest a different understanding of timing, that sensitivity to the rhythms offered by the model. The timing of Dream Time is essentially organic/circadian, following natural cycles in which human beings respond to changes with minimal sense of driving the timing. Judeo-Christian timing, often described as millenarian, is however

[1]University of the Sunshine Coast, QLD, Australia

Corresponding Author:
Marcus Bussey, University of the Sunshine Coast, Locked Bag 4, Maroochydore DC, QLD 4558, Australia.
Email: mbussey@usc.edu.au

heavily invested in human agency in the quest for salvation (Cohn 1970). Thus, Dream Time suggests limited agency, whereas Judeo-Christian time is suggestive of strong agency. Both models frame and determine a reality; both also offer alternative aesthetic representations of the future. The aesthetic refers to the "science of the senses" of which the arts are a subset (Bussey 2017). More broadly, aesthetics accounts for a sense of "rightness" or "order" that people recognize and share. How time is experienced and understood is certainly a sensory issue, as it is aesthetically conditioned. Aesthetics also is anticipatory (Nadin 2010), as are the models of time that underpin cultures and also the grand visions of macrohistorians. Models act as aesthetic frames, as the work of Galtung and Inayatullah (1997) on macrohistory demonstrates. The appendices of their book offers graphic representations of the models associated with each macrohistorian's understanding of timing.

Futurists disturb the peace precisely because they disturb the temporal assumptions of their clients. This is not our only brief of course, but it is an important part of what we do and it sits squarely in approaches to foresight and futures thinking. Inayatullah's "Six Pillars" approach, for instance, offers us "mapping, anticipating, timing, deepening, creating alternatives, and transforming" (Inayatullah 2008). His sequence is well thought out and based on nearly thirty years in the trade. Timing comes as the third pillar as he progressively works toward transformation as the ultimate goal. This paper seeks to do its bit in "disturbing the peace" by offering some approaches to time and timing possibly less familiar to some readers. The basic premise of the paper is that *we are "called by time" to act according to our temporal models and that these are generated and maintained by culture.* The aim is to add to the conceptual repertoire of our trade/art so that we can leverage a set of temporal concepts to better achieve our goal of making elements of time, timing, and indeed transformation explicit.

Adjectives and Models

When approaching the question of time in futures work, we must first of all give thanks for adjectives. Without adjectives any discussion about the temporal dimension of what we do as futurists would be meaningless. The adjective offers us a boundary marker that delineates the context within which the understanding of time is framed. Each adjective assumes a model of "how things are." Each model offers an aesthetic order based on a set of rules and assumptions that bring coherence to a temporal practice. So, for instance, if we speak of "clock" time, we immediately think of industrial order, of the application of economics to time and social relationships. The image of the clock produces a set of ordered relationships to past, present, and future that are linear and assume productivity and improvement as the core social good.

The adjective alerts us to the temporal culture at work in relation to desired ends (an image of the social "good" for instance). Each adjective is a key to engaging in the narrative orders shaping our experience of culture. In fact narrative presumes temporal order, and because cultures are narrative enterprises (Runia 2014; Wright 2006) futurists work both across and between temporal and narrative landscapes. These landscapes converge and are expressed in context, which is the spatial domain that grounds narrative in time and place. This intersection is captured beautifully by Mikhail Bakhtin's (1982, 84) concept "chronotope" that refers to "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature."

Futures work, I argue, extends Bakhtin's insights into time and space by recognizing and engaging with the chronotopic in the everyday processes of organizations, communities, and their cultures. A *futures* chronotope shifts Bakhtin's literary insight into the "real world." Time and space, which are two expressions of context, establish the "rules" for such an engagement. Futurists, always searching for optimal outcomes for their clients, then work with these rules to explore alternative temporal narratives (aka chronotopes) and put to the test sets of narrative possibilities (scenarios) to design viable chronotopic pathways toward preferred futures.

Milojević and Inayatullah (2015, 152) capture this chronotopic process clearly when they note,

> Various uses of narrative, e.g. framing of new and reframing of old narratives, have been part and parcel of futures thinking from the very beginning. In a similar way that narrative has been used in history—to investigate patterns of change—narrative has also been used in futures studies since the development of the field.

It goes without saying that every narrative approach to the world is premised on a usually unconscious set of assumptions about time (Fabian 1983; Seremetakis 1996). Much futures work seeks to disrupt such assumptions. This is a creative and highly satisfying space to work in. Ours is a time-obsessed culture, so it is not hard to find things to say. *What is difficult is to say useful things*. My goal is to drill down into the temporal inventiveness of futures work by dwelling on the linguistic and conceptual aspects of temporal discourse. I began such work above with a reflection on the importance of adjectives and narrative. Bakhtin's work is very useful in this regard. He of course is not alone in exposing the politics of time at work in our lives; Foucault (2005), Fabian (1983), Deleuze (1994), Agamben (1993), and even dreamy Heidegger ([1927] 1962) and many others have contributed to this discussion. Yet what is of real relevance is how futurists can leverage a variety of temporal concepts to better achieve their goal of making elements of time, timing, and transformation explicit to their clients and students. So this paper is structured around this temporal work. Its tone is abstract, but its goal is practical: to inform and extend the temporal thinking and conceptual tools available to futurists.

Temporal Inventiveness

So to return to the reflection on adjectives and narrative begun above, I note that every narrative assumes a given temporal model or chronotope: one that shapes how human agency is understood and experienced. The adjective boundary work kicks in here so that clock time might easily accommodate "a business as usual" scenario; slow time might work well with what Jim Dator (2002, 10) describes as a "disciplined society," whereas dream time might constitute what Sohail Inayatullah (2008, 17–18) calls an "outlier" scenario. What is assumed in each is a temporal axis at the heart of cultures and a sense that people, as both culture makers and cultural actors, can be empowered to switch temporalities at will. Such a switch is experienced by people on a daily basis when they move from one chronotope (the office, the school, the shopping center, etc.) to another (the home, the playground, the forest, etc.). There is an *inventiveness* at work when such shifts are conscious, yet most of the time, we sleep walk into the future as both individual and collective surrender to unconscious temporal orders.

Scenario work is a generalized example of this inventiveness. However, for more specific examples, we can turn to Dator's (2002, 12) work with graduate students whom he guides to "become inventors of new political systems." Similarly, Inayatullah offers the four chronotopic contexts in the Sarkar Game (Hayward and Voros 2006) whereas Stuart Candy and Jake Dunagan explore experiential futures work at the intersection of futures and design thinking. In a recent paper (Candy and Dunagan 2016), they describe how time is shaped by workshop participants as they develop a deep time scenario that intersects with the present's preoccupation with future images of decline. In a similar vein, I explore the intimacy of the future via the senses in activities such as play, mask making, and multi-lingual workshops designed to disrupt and destabilize dominant temporal regimes (Bussey 2014c).

In such work, adjectives are a source of invention that help us delineate temporal zones and give form to the mental models that sustain our worldviews. However, given culture's conceptual inventiveness adjectives also have limits—and when such limits are reached people turn to neologisms. For instance, anthropology and communication theory have generated a set of neologisms that describe different temporal states such as the word polychronic that

describes the folded nature of time, the mono-chronic that describes linear time, the dia-chronic (changes over time) and synchronic (changes at a specific time), and the chronemic that looks at relational time in the context of power (Bruneau 1980; Fabian 1983). To this list, and it is potentially a long one, we could add Heidegger's concept of *dasein* that relates to "being" in the moment (see Bussey 2006). Johannes Fabian, in his critique of the objectifying practices of mid-twentieth-century anthropologists, suggests that such terms—as categories—often distance the observer from the object of study. Thus, there is a "politics of time" at work in what we do as futurists (Fabian 1983, x). Yet futurists are, for the most part, comfortable, with what Fabian calls *coevalness*: the sense of being a participant observer, of actively co-creating the meaning and the experience of narrative time, chronotope, in their workshop. Another rich neologism is "chronophobia," coined by art historian Pamela Lee (2006), which essentially captures the sense of temporal compression and its emotional load of anxiety, fear, and hyperstimulation.

Such neologisms pick up where adjectives cease to adequately capture new temporal insights/experiences in their fullness and possibility. Indeed, as modernity unfolded across the past two centuries, it became increasingly necessary to describe temporal consciousness through a variety of adjectival and neologistic combinations. This inventiveness is driven by the insight that how we find ourselves as actors in the world is contingent on how we time our lives and our societies (Agamben 1998; Foucault 2005; Gadamer 2013; Heidegger [1927] 1962). This is both a phenomenological and a socio-political inquiry into which futures work intrudes as it seeks to increase the temporal spectrum, and thus the inherent possibilities, of human action. However we approach this proliferation of temporal codes, it is clear that increased temporal complexity is a primary driver of stress, violence, and also creativity in today's world. Time itself has become a chief ingredient in anxiety and this sense is captured in Lee's (2006) concept of chronophobia touched on above. The following section looks

in more detail at this sense of temporal compression.

Stress and Invention

Chronophobia has its corollary in the work of Douglas Rushkoff (2013). Rushkoff is an aficionado of presentism. Rushkoff (2013, 265) describes a "today" that is experiencing narrative collapse brought on by "the media and culture around us all." As I note above, narrative and time come together in space/place to express culture. Or to put it another way, culture is an engine of narrative. And narrative both shapes and is shaped by time and place. This is Bakhtin's chronotope at work. The collapse of narrative, Rushkoff (2013, 13–14) argues, is an expression of the compression of time brought on by the disorientation caused by the triumph of digital media over everyday life. Thus, he notes,

> Experiencing the world as a series of stories helps create a sense of context. It is comforting and orienting. It helps to smooth out obstacles and impediments by recasting them as bumps along the way to some better place.

Later he asks,

> But stories cannot truly come to the rescue of people who no longer have the time or trust required to respond to narrativity. What if stories themselves are incompatible with a presentist culture? (p. 39)

Now although Rushkoff is not particularly kind to futurists (see Rushkoff 2013, 16), I accept his point and argue that the role of our "trade" is to work against presentism. Futurists are time travelers who deploy the anticipatory imagination in response to the yearning people have for something beyond the horizon: that elemental "What if?" that calls to us, inviting what Giambattista Vico called *inventio*.

As the historian Eelco Runia (2014, 153) has noted,

> It is by means of *inventio* that time and again the "new" is invented out of "old" metonymical places. It is by means of *inventio* that "the nations" have mutated from one "level of being"

to another and have actually reached the point they have today . . . Vico . . . awakens dogs that lie sleeping and—by making "non-sense" of the here and now—*reinvents* the discontinuities that are stored in what we take for granted.

Runia is pointing to the immanent possibilities of culture and its chronotopes. This inventive dimension to culture's narrative possibilities is what futurists work with when engaging people in shaking off their "present shock." Such work requires a sensitivity to the temporality of our clients along with a determination to emancipate one and all from the bonds of a dominant "clock" that colonizes our psyches. Given the authority of the present over all other considerations that frame agency, this is persistent work in which futurists keep one foot in the present and another in deep time (Nandy 2007, 176). This possibility of simultaneously inhabiting multiple time frames, the polychronic, is an important "oracular" dimension of futurist's work (Bussey 2009).

This insight is captured beautifully by the anthropologist Loren Eiseley (1907–1977) who noted of this human faculty:

> Man is, in reality, an oracular animal. Bereft of instinct, he must search constantly for meanings. We forget that, like a child, man was a reader before he became a write, a reader of what Coleridge once called the mighty alphabet of the universe. (1994, 144–45)

The oracular of course speaks to a particular stance vis-à-vis the world. This is the space of *mythos* at work within the lifeworlds of humanity (Bussey 2014a; MacGill 2015). Mythic narratives provide the subjective energy for our activity in the world. As a living dimension of culture mythic, chronotopes evolve slowly, but at times, rapid mutations can occur as they did for instance when Western Europe and then the world rushed headlong into the Industrial Revolution and Modernity (Runia 2014). Such a leap suggests we are capable of such daring again and *that is a reason for hope*; it is a reason to put aside the guarded pessimism of Rushkoff and focus on what can be done in the light of the futures we face.

Change and Timing

In fact, I see hope as an integral part of the futurists brief; it is essential for strong action on behalf of the future. Equally, it is clear that how we hope is conditioned by our temporal models. If we subscribe to a millennial eschatology, our hope will be other worldly; if we are Marxists, we understand change as contingent on revolution, and therefore our hope is for an overturning of the dominant world economic system. Such temporal models are clearly limited so perhaps we should invest our hope in less specific models of change. Being optimistic allows us to hope more generally, with less partisan fervor. It makes sense to me that part of what is to be done by futurists is laying bare the temporal models that shape individual and collective hope and the decisions such hope underpins.

Thus futurists' work can be broadly optimistic, fostering hope by navigating temporal complexity and teasing out the key temporal models that are shaping the hopes and fears of their clients (Bussey 2016). For instance, macrohistory, as used by Inayatullah (2008), reveals aspects of these models, whereas scenarios and narrative work, and even simple timelines, all work toward a deeper engagement with the multiple chronologies at work in all human contexts. Similarly, heritage futures also play a significant role in folding the pasts of a context into possible alternative futures. Such folding requires both memory work and anticipatory design to not just catch a wave but also hopefully set some waves in motion. *Timing becomes a key issue* then as it speaks to the present through an intuitive optimism that weaves the possible and the preferable into new forms that incorporate both past and future conditions and intimations. Yet this anticipatory faculty is only as strong as its mental models. Change the model and we change the timing.

So change is at the heart of the futurist's work. Paradoxically of course change is a source of both anxiety and hope. So futurists seek to not just manage change, or second guess it. We go deeper, further than that. We seek to be a part of it, not just to be the change

we wish to see in the world, as Gandhi would have it, but to stir it up: provoke it. Yet change is not that simple. The reality of the change needs to be understood and interrogated as to its nature, its quality. I think this ultimately gets down to how we experience change, how it affects us: is it a new gadget or a new policy? A new idea or a new brand of toothpaste? We can be offered choices but are they illusory or real? Does the change inspire hope? Are we passive recipients or active players? Jim Dator (1978) asked such questions as he ended his short essay on the "Futures of Anticipatory Democracy." The tension between real choices and the banality of the "devil and the deep blue sea" is just as alive and well today as when he wrote that essay. In fact time seems to have slipped away, to have evaded our best efforts to harness its potential. Yet in other respects, the world of 1978 and the world today are two vastly different places.

The historian Filipe Fernandez-Armesto (2015, 25) sums the situation up nicely:

> The problem of how to understand time is inextricably part of the problem of how to understand change. No time, no change. No change, no time: only the kind of changeless eternity that religious traditions call "God."

Similarly, the philosopher Meera Chakravorty (2007, 130) notes,

> Change and processes do not occur in time, they are Time.

Empirically we know the world changes and that human agency counts; thus, we hope, yet we also know that managing change is no easy thing. The managerialist approach to change—often confused with foresight work—is only ever partial. The alternative to change management is more elusive and also more compelling. Organizational theorist Peter Clark (1990) tried to map this divide by identifying "chronological codes" as being of two kinds: homogeneous and heterogeneous. His work offers us a fascinating taxonomy of temporal relations in which "some temporal units are relatively stable, yet *the most important units are probably very unstable and*

highly variable" (Clark 1990, 145; emphasis in original). This variability, of course, is what interests futurists. Following Clark, we understand that when change is experienced as an exogenous force, time is understood as homogeneous. Because discovering and enabling agency is key to futures work, it is in the adaptive and creative endogenous responses to timing that energy is best invested. With this insight we have now arrived at the structure-agency conundrum of social science. To side step this impasse, we can turn to the temporal patterning at work in macrohistorical approaches to time.

Time's Rhythmic Nature

The codes Clark is describing are subsets of our temporal models as they speak to various arenas within which, and for which, the communities and organizations function. Timing the world is a complex human activity: time stretches, shrinks, dreams, and collapses following rules that often seem mysterious. To describe temporal codes is relatively easy; to get inside the temporal models that generate them is less so. Galtung and Inayatullah (1997) have sought to do just this by describing a range of macrohistorical models. These models, such as Sorokin's pendulum and Sarkar's *varnas*, provide clear patterns that illustrate the rhythmicity of timing and the various ways historical change can be understood. They highlight the embeddedness of such rhythms in our cultures. In essence, we adopt models and submit to their orderings of our temporal realities because they provide meaning and coherence. Each model in fact acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy that we collectively submit to and enact. To expose such models to our clients is a major step toward their regaining agency within context. Dirk Bunzel (2002, 178–79), in describing this "rhythmic subjection," offers a real insight into how we align our actions and expectations, our models of change, to the rhythmic structures that surround us:

> Rhythmic subjection is not passive: on the contrary, it is fundamentally *active*. It not only demands the creative contribution of rhythmizing consciousness; it also implies a certain obligation. To achieve the

rhythmic coessentiality desired, individuals/groups have to *act*. Dancing, perhaps the best example, asks for coordinated movement to evoke and sustain the rhythmic experience (coessentiality) desired—in fact, this is what qualifies dancing as such. In other words, rhythms are *calls for action*.

This call for action is central to timing. Our models are not separate from our lives. We live them both socially and intimately. We practice our models and cultivate our identities within time. Thus culture is the ultimate vessel of time in which temporal ecologies evolve and through which we all find ourselves. This "finding" of self-in-time is not a passive activity—it involves every moment of every day. We live and breathe this work; it is a bio-psycho-cultural project with rich phenomenological and aesthetic possibilities. In fact, time is perhaps the most intimate experience we have as finite beings. This phenomenological dimension of time motivated Martin Heidegger ([1927] 1962) to explore the relation of *being* to *time* and has preoccupied many philosophers both before and after him (Bergson [1887] 1960; Deleuze 1993; Foucault 2005; Gadamer 2013; Husserl [1905–1910] 1964). Time and timing therefore is a given in futures work.

This paper began with comments on temporal models and the need to disturb them and then offered a reflection on the power of adjectives, neologisms, and narrative. It then turned to questions of temporal compression, stress, narrative collapse, and presentism to begin the quest for hopeful temporal pathways into the future. This quest in turn led to considerations of change, and a generalized optimism. It was suggested that timing and the patterns of macrohistory become powerful vehicles for rethinking the dominant temporal maps that order our thinking and assumptions about reality. This path relied heavily on an understanding of culture as inventive (thanks Vico and Runia), and of people as potentially creative collaborators in change processes. As the paper now turns toward a conclusion of sorts, we need to consider two final aspects to futurists temporal work: first, there is the question of "narrative action" in response to *a sense that time calls us into being*, and therefore action;

second, we need to consider the transformative possibilities that are inherent to temporality itself—this its evolutionary potential that I describe as patterning over pattern (Bussey 2014b).

Time's Calling

It is the contention of this paper that time calls us to be "more": to continually seek to expand both our individual and collective potential. We yearn to fill time both actively and symbolically, via narrative action. *Futurists work with this calling as anticipatory knowledge workers* exploring our culture's epistemic and ontological limits and the temporal ecologies that support these. Our focus is on timing and change and the rich possibilities available to people as they grapple with their individual and collective futures. To borrow from communication theory (Leston 2013), futurists mobilize a context's *kairos*, "right timing," in our attempt to problematize the present and explore alternatives that appear as cracks, roads not taken, in the past and the present. Robert Leston suggests that *kairos* is the inventive principle at the heart of timing. His description of the "untimely" as a rupture in linear chronological time that generates the interstitial moment for rupture provides us with an insight into the destabilizing work of the futurist:

> The untimely seeps in through this interstice, shocking us out of our habitual way of accepting the flow of time. (Leston 2013, 46)

The futurist works to step outside of their local homogeneous time: the gravity of the habituated moment. This is an attempt to move from what was termed *weak agency* in the opening section above, to *strong agency*. Being for a moment outside of dominant temporal codes invites in the untimely, the disruptive that "*unhinges*" *time* and unleashes new creativity and energy into the structures people inhabit. This unhinging invites our clients to *act*—to fill time with alternative images, to take new pathways and weave new supportive narratives. As Leston (2013, 47) argues,

When I am confronted with an image or set of images that are too great for me, when I encounter the sublime, rather than beautifying it, the ego experiences a "crack." It is just then, when the sensory-motor schema has broken down, when we cannot continue to narrativize, and when time is unhinged; in short, when we have reached our limit, it is then, in that gap, in that kairos, that invention becomes possible, even necessary.

Time, in the guise of *kairos*, is the creative principle at the heart of futurist's work. Our task is to locate those we work with in various meaningful and possibly disturbing temporalities. Thus we are called to build bridges between the inside-outside of time. Such work is relational and involves futurists and their clients in co-creating narrative pathways and accompanying actions into the future in which both the timely and the timeless collide and generate creative sparks. Such creative sparks are touched on by the anthropologist Maurice Bloch (2010) in his description of an emptied "transcendental social" in which social actors deliberately remove themselves from the transactional world via ritual and then move back into the world of action, via acts of "rebounding violence" (Bloch 2010, 160) that once again reinstate the "real." The context for Bloch's reflections is the built environment of Çatalhöyük, but he generalizes to argue that all human societies engage "a transcendental, time-denying social element" (Bloch 2010, 159) that is emptied via ritual which

leeches out intentionality and the tumult of life continually created by actions to make it the static world where roles and corporate groups can exist. (Bloch 2010, 158)

For Bloch, the transcendental denies time as he is committed to a powerful materialist ontology. Ritual eliminates agency. Thus, *culture is emptied of agency through the submission to its own routines*. My reading of this process is that agency is suspended through routine (aka ritual) and regained in the day-to-day struggles of individuals and groups and that this is where pragmatic relationality is found vis-à-vis an abstracted universality. The routines and rituals of life, organizations, systems, and communities dull the individual and suppress agency and the self-awareness this implies. In response to this, time is to be unhinged through a range of futures activities where the transcendental is ruptured and social activity (relationality) reclaims its inventive potential.

Patterning Not Pattern

The calling of time is an invitation to bring some magic back into a world that has been pared back, made ordinary and functional by the industrialization of clock time. Modernity's colonizing sense of order, expressed in our technologies and our relationships, our cities, and our media, has reduced our sensitivity to deeper experiences of time (Hetherington 1997). The result is that we have been inoculated against dreaming. The cells in our bodies, the neurons in our brains, hum at higher frequencies than our ancestors (Abram 1996). Now, this is not necessarily a problem as something evolutionarily important is happening (Fernandez-Armesto 2015). A case can certainly be made that the demolition of slow time and its analogues made way for the world we inhabit today. This loss might be described as "collateral damage." Chronophobia is a clear response to this damage. Our futures work is one way of addressing this mutation in our temporal lives.

The prime disruptive activity of futures work is, I believe, the invitation to dream beyond the domesticated temporalities that confine our personal and working lives. It is an invitation to come to our senses, to borrow Morris Berman's (1989) phrase: *to dream in the sense I am using is to step into time for a moment*. It is not to vacate time but to remove oneself from the bonds of the narrow temporal fields, a singular chronotope, that routinize life and order our perceptions (Nandy 2007). Futures chronotopes offer the multiple in response to the singular, inviting in a strong agency that is able to inhabit the polychronic with grace and thus also resilient and collaborative. New orders appear with new perspectives on things. Just as people find

meaning through their narratives, so we find meaning in the patterns we perceive around us. Narratives are powerful patterning processes that respond to our aesthetic conditioning. Perception and patterning are aesthetic activities and at the heart of how we find ourselves in the world (Bussey 2017). Reading patterns is an anticipatory faculty inherent to all people; it is, as Richard Slaughter (1995) reminds us, at the heart of foresight.

Futurists empower those they work with to step out of time and see the world around them as newly patterned, relationally active, and alive to our presence. This is a co-creative open space in which, for a moment at least, ordered life appears in ruins and from which new possibilities emerge (Gafijczuk 2013). In fact, the trick is to enable people to see their own complicity in the ordering–reordering of their worlds. When one is complicit, one is also empowered to change "what is." Rather than being "caught in the act" of reifying the present we get to reconfigure our own stories and the patterning work that sustains them. This is an aesthetic activity that we all engage in. It is the ordering activities deployed to help us manage life. We are, however, for the most part unaware of this faculty. However, the evolutionary pressure we are now under, both individually and collectively, is to wake up to this ordering ability inherent to us all as the key to narrative action. As noted, Berman (1989) describes this as *coming to our senses*. This is a reflexive awakening, and the futurist engages in this work when in the classroom and the boardroom. New orders, what Berman calls "codes" and I think of as patterns, are no longer givens but processes: coding not codes, patterning not patterns. Berman (1989, 313) nails it when he observes,

> Part of our goal, undoubtedly, is to learn what it means to live without paradigm, but I also sense a much more complex possibility, viz., developing a radical new code that is itself about coding, and is not merely a shift in coding. This is where reflexivity—the awareness of coding as coding, or Grudjieff's "self-remembering" on a cultural scale—becomes so important. Christianity, Catharism . . ., science, and even cybernetic holism . . . are all heuristically valuable, but they are not "true." Only our need for truth is true, and the problem arises when any one of these tools, or codes, is mapped onto our entire ontology. Reflexivity is about the breaking away from this vertical, binary pathology, for it does not (necessarily) say, "Have no codes," but only requires a deliberate awareness of constructing and using a code, and the having of that awareness as part of our code.

Through objectifying our temporal models and releasing the reflexive energies inherent to human potential, futurists act as agents in the shift Berman is describing. Sensitivity to the temporal, the ability to articulate temporal models, and to play between them to release the creative sparks in all contexts is a large part of what we do. We are bridge builders between our current anorexic temporal culture and future engagements with the folded temporality of *kairos*. In this, we offer direction, the alignment of disruption with goal. This is the partisan nature of our work (Bussey 2014b). Opening up the temporal landscapes of clients and then aligning the disruptive energy, Bloch's "rebounding violence," re-animates the domesticated temporality of organizations and individuals. These are transformative moments when our futures senses come to the fore and vivify the futures context (Bussey 2016).

Modern Times

By way of conclusion, I wish to time travel back to 1936 when Charlie Chaplin produced the classic film, *Modern Times*, in which he exposed and lampooned the industrial and linear mode of being that characterizes modernity. His target was the clock and the ordering power of "factory" time. Such temporal orders struck, and still strike, at the heart of human creativity.

I would say that in the light of these reflections on modern "times," the futurist's response to time's calling is to

1. develop tools that critique the politics of time at work in both organizational and individual contexts;

2. foster optimism by making explicit the temporal models that either inhibit or facilitate transformation; and

3. empower clients and students to craft vibrant and heterogeneous temporal ecologies better able to sustain optimal futures.

Time, timing, and change/transformation all underpin this work. As it is, we are a sleeping civilization plagued by bad dreams (Saul 1997). The modern world finds its way into us through the imposition of a domesticated temporality that restricts the imagination and dulls our futures senses. Deleuze (1993, 86), in describing this process, captures this sense of loss and dullness as the numbing of the individual (aka monad):

> The world exists only in its representatives as long as they are included in each monad. It is a lapping of waves, a rumor, a fog, a mass of dancing particles of dust. It is a state of death or catalepsy, of sleep, drowsiness, or of numbness. It is as if the depths of every monad were made from an infinity of tiny folds (inflections). Endlessly furling and unfurling in every direction, so that the monad's spontaneity resembles that of agitated sleepers who twist and turn on their mattresses.

Our task as futurists is to work toward a lifting of this state from our minds. When the senses are dulled and our capacity for surprise is blunted, we can always *play with time*. From this position we can challenge the vapid presentism and the constant temporal agitation that dominates social relations today. Indeed, we can indulge in the linguistic inventiveness of our field and extend our lexicon of temporal terms, strategies, and concepts to continually challenge ourselves, our colleagues, and our clients to answer the calling of time to become "more." It is not so much what we do when we hear this call; it is that we understand that as futurists such a call is a powerful motivation for change and transformation and also a source of optimism in times of fear and uncertainty.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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Author Biography

Marcus Bussey, PhD, is senior lecturer in History and Futures at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. As a futurist and educator, his interests are in cultural change and community empowerment. He has written widely on these and related topics. For further information please visit his University page: http://www.usc.edu.au/explore/structure/faculty-of-arts-business-and-law/staff/dr-marcus-bussey