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<AT>The Politics of Anticipation: On Knowing and Governing Environmental Futures

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<ABS-HEAD>Highlights ► The historical emergence and rise of future studies, since the founding issue of *Futures* in 1968, has been intricately connected to the development of environmental anticipation as discourse and practice. ► There is a dialectical and inter-twined relationship between technologies of environmental anticipation and forecasting, and technologies of anti-environmentalist anticipation and counter-intervention. ► The field of futures studies has genealogical relations both to environmental anticipation and forecasting, and to the strategic horizons of fossil fuel interests. ► Social scientists have a role to play in environmental anticipation – ie. drawing attention to the fact that the future could always have been otherwise.

<ABS-HEAD>Abstract

<ABS-P>In this article we describe how the historical emergence and rise of future studies, since the founding issue of *Futures* in 1968, has been intricately connected to the emergence and development of environmental anticipation as discourse and practice. We trace a dialectical and inter-twined relationship between technologies of environmental anticipation and forecasting, and technologies of anti-environmentalist anticipation and counter-intervention, one which we argue shapes not only the contemporary politics of anticipation, but in a very material sense, the future conditions of biological and social life on Earth. In so doing we want to address the possible contributions that the field of futures studies can make to reimagining collective agency and ways of being on Earth, whilst reflecting critically upon its genealogical relations to the political reason and strategic horizons of powerful fossil fuel interests, from the crisis of the 1970s to the present. The article also offers a more in-depth contextualization to the other articles in this special issue of *Futures* on "The Politics of Environmental Anticipation". The aim is to bring to the fore the role that social scientists play in environmental anticipation – ie. drawing attention to the fact that the future could always have been otherwise.

<KWD>Keywords: anticipation; global environmental change; future studies

Introduction

"Hell is truth seen too late."

Attributed by some to the political philosopher Thomas Hobbes and by others to the philosopher of history Georg W. Hegel, this apocryphal aphorism might be said to define the existential rationale of the cross-discipline of future studies. A relatively young social science arising from modern forms of political, scientific, technological and economic organisation, the arts and sciences of anticipation are engaged with a wide array of knowledge traditions

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