“Between facts and norms” is how Jürgen Habermas describes the mediating place that law works to occupy and by which it exercises its unique communicative force in state-level societies. But, at least from an ontological perspective, law is not the only authoritative discourse that stakes a claim to that mediating ground, and the authority that comes with working in-between the temporalities of facts and norms. Discourses of custom and tradition, for example, have come under critique for subjecting the complexities of contemporary indigenous life according to their own, often colonially inspired, temporal logics, and then eliding the fact that they are so doing. The effect of both law and tradition, in managing this in-between is a kind of representative impossibility such that the authority claims made by either are always exceeded by the actual lives whose measure they take. In this paper, I suggest that it is in its confrontation with the mediating temporalities of inheritance – and the way it works to combine the facts and norms of property transmission -- that law is most starkly revealed as constituted of a despotic temporality whose claim to the mediating ground between facts and norms in many cases prohibit, rather than promote, the resolution of inheritance disputes. I propose to explore this with examples from my own research in the Hopi tribal court, as well as from Anglo-American inheritance law more generally, especially the notoriously difficult Rule Against Perpetuities.