



ETHNOGRAPHIES OF WAITING

...

DOUBT, HOPE AND UNCERTAINTY

Manpreet K. Janeja
Andreas Bandak



ROUTLEDGE

Ethnographies of Waiting



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Doubt, Hope and Uncertainty

Edited by Manpreet K. Janeja and Andreas Bandak

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Preface and Acknowledgements

This volume initially took off from a panel on *Ethnographies of Waiting*, organised by Manpreet in June 2014, at the ASA Decennial Conference held in Edinburgh. We are enormously grateful to the other panellists who were there, and who contributed so much to our thinking, but for one reason and another have not been able to be part of this volume, indexical of some of the types and entanglements of waiting analysed in the book itself. They, and the discussant, were a great spur to our project. The reader will find the papers mentioned in the Introduction.

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We would like to thank all the contributors who entered this conversation on waiting and took it forward. Thank you for joining in and for contributing with such engaged papers. We really appreciate Craig Jeffrey for writing such an

incisive Foreword. We are grateful to the team at Bloomsbury, especially Jennifer Schmidt, Miriam Cantwell, Clara Herberg and Lucy Carroll, for their patience and work in bringing this volume to fruition.

Manpreet K. Janeja and Andreas Bandak
Copenhagen, 30 June 2017

Foreword

Craig Jeffrey

In his book *The Sense of an Ending*, Frank Kermode asks the reader to consider the ticking of a clock. Each tick is identical. But the mind's ear imposes an order on the sounds. We imagine the ticks as two distinct types: 'tick' and then 'tock'. As Kermode puts it in his brilliant prose: 'Tick is a humble genesis; tock the feeble apocalypse'.

Kermode goes on to discuss the different qualities of time that our ordering of the ticking noises produces. The short interval between tick and tock is full of expectation. It corresponds with what the Greeks termed 'kairos': meaning, filled time. By contrast, the interval between tock and tick corresponds to 'chronos' in Greek terms. It is simply dead time, empty successiveness.

As a literary critic, Kermode is interested in how authors construct a tick tock in their novels and plays. And he is also interested in how they subvert narratives. Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is paradigmatic, the characters moving awkwardly between a sense of kairos and chronos – waiting one moment, languishing in dead time the next. 'That passed the time,' the character Vladimir comments at one point in the play. 'It would have passed anyway,' his friend Estragon deadpans back.

The authors of this volume are interested in how people construct tick tocks in different places and at different times. Many of the young people with whom I have worked in north India were brought up with a regular procession of tick tocks characterizing their lives. They took tests in school, for example, and they typically passed and graduated to the next class. But these young people were unlucky enough to come onto the job market at a time when graduate employment was extremely scarce. They often responded by waiting. They stayed focused on the tock. Primed to hope. But doubt started creeping in. Time rushed in on their consciousness, and young people became preoccupied with managing 'dead time'. Timepass became the watchword, not the pleasurable diversionary activity implied by the English word 'pastime', but the dreadful emptiness of a Godot-like existence.

‘What are you doing?’ I often asked my informants.

‘Nothing’ came the reply.

‘Nothing?’ I persisted.

‘Timepass’, they said.

This rich and complex edited book provides a compendium of modern timepass. Andreas Bandak and Manpreet Kaur Janeja should be congratulated for their work.

I want to pick out four important themes in the collection, also nicely described in different terms by Bandak and Janeja in their authoritative introduction. First, the book charts the sheer diversity of ways in which people in different parts of the world experience time and, within that, engage with the business and art of ‘waiting’. Social hardship associated with a lack of security, housing, work and education has propelled increasing numbers of people into situations in which they are forced to wait, often indefinitely. A challenge for scholars is to explore how this sense of waiting is experienced, while also attending to the wider structures that shape people’s apprehension of waiting, and, at the same time, remaining sensitive to surprising differences and unexpected similarities across contexts.

Second, the volume shows that waiting is not simply imposed on people – even if this is how it must feel to Vladimir or Estragon or unemployed young men in India. People actively and creatively invent ways of passing time and ‘waiting’, as beautifully illustrated in several chapters in this volume and discussed in the Introduction. Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Synnøve Bendixsen’s elegant ethnography of Palestinians in Oslo is especially strong on this point. These authors chart in detail how their research subjects reorder local time to create a sense of ‘tick tock’, even in unpromising circumstances.

Third, the book exposes the importance of waiting as a type of methodology. This is a fascinating and rich theme, and I expect to see a series of geographical and anthropological projects that explore how ‘ethnographic waiting’ can serve as a basis for understanding social change.

Finally, what this volume does superbly well – and I think it will be one of its long-term signal contributions – is to get the reader to think in earnest and in different contexts about how people shift from a sense of purposeful waiting to a purposeless inertia and back again. We learn about stoicism, persistence, perseverance and patience, but we also learn about ennui, listlessness, timepass and inertia, and – crucially – we learn about how people move from being engaged in the first set of activities to the second set, or vice versa. We

also learn about the political stakes and struggles associated with what gets labelled, say, as 'patience' and what gets classed simply as 'loitering'. Waiting emerges as an unstable object and uncertain terrain that occurs within fields of power.

Waiting is not an absence; it is the grounds for having fascinating conversations about suffering, modernity, agency and difference. Kermode himself would be fascinated.



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Introduction: Worth the Wait

Andreas Bandak and Manpreet K. Janeja

Waiting is a ubiquitous and familiar phenomenon. It could even be said that waiting is an integral part of human life. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of waiting is just beginning to be taken up as a theme of ethnographic enquiry in its own right in recent social and cultural anthropological work. It is noteworthy that we have had to wait all these years for an active, focused engagement with such a pervasive phenomenon. In this edited volume, we aim to explore various modalities of waiting. Our central claim is that waiting must be conceptualized both as figure in its own right as well as a trigger for various forms of social energies. Waiting, we therefore propose, must be scrutinized in relation to the central figures of hope, doubt and uncertainty. Waiting is a particular engagement in, and with, time. For a period, short or extended, an individual or a collective finds itself placed in a situation where what is hoped for or anxiously anticipated has not yet been actualized. This period allows an exploration of what Hannah Arendt designated as 'the human condition' (1998 [1958]). Arendt wrote of 'man's' relation to time in *Between Past and Future* (1993 [1968]: 11):

Seen from the viewpoint of man, who always lives in the interval between past and future, time is not a continuum, a flow of uninterrupted succession; it is broken in the middle, at the point where 'he' stands; and 'his' standpoint is not the present as we usually understand it but rather a gap in time which 'his' constant fighting, 'his' making a stand against past and future, keeps in existence. Only because man is inserted into time and only to the extent that he stands his ground does the flow of indifferent time break up into tenses.

We are grateful to James Bielo, Marilyn Strathern, Martin Demant Frederiksen, Michael Herzfeld and Simon Coleman for their incisive comments and suggestions. All infelicities remain our own.

While we would be reluctant to write of ‘man’ in the same way as Arendt does in this passage, she captures something important, namely that modernity places human beings in a particular relation to time. In a modern conception of time, human beings are situated in a gap, in an interval where there is an engagement with different forces. Arendt concedes that this conception is not a solely modern phenomenon, rather the gap may coexist with human beings as such (1993 [1968]: 13). For Arendt, the gap in which human beings find themselves is not related to the figure of waiting. The gap, in her understanding, is where thought and action can take place in a ‘constant fighting’. Given that Arendt’s is a particular modernist conception of time, and of life as being lived in an ‘interval between past and future’, more ground needs to be covered in order to understand the ‘human condition’ in all its diversity as well as potentials that variously conceived temporalities and temporal gaps and intervals might afford for social and cultural life. In these variegated temporal engagements, it is important to explore how and when this is experienced as a passive waiting or when this is an active waiting for something (Marcel 1967; Crapanzano 1985; Hage 2009). In other words, waiting as a concept enables us to explore ethnographically what forms action, thought and social relationships acquire in diverse engagements in, and with, time. Conversely, we need to explore what forms of thinking, acting and relating are shunned, occluded or neglected when situated in these temporal configurations. What happens, we ask, when such temporal relations, gaps and intervals shift from being temporary phenomena to more permanent and pervasive figures, when – to paraphrase Veena Das (2016) – they may even become a form of life? What happens to the experience of time and the capacity to wait in variegated configurations of power, new technological inventions and legal regulations? And to follow up on Arendt’s argument above, how do gendered roles and cultural ideals form repositories to persist, endure and deal with waiting, or we might ask, how is waiting itself regularized by particular cultural norms? How can we use the ethnographic method and the various forms of waiting it entails in exploring the phenomenon of waiting? How do we, as anthropologists, work, plan and also wait in the crafting of our analyses? How are we to assess when something is worth the wait, and how do we act and think while we are at it?

The phenomenon of waiting needs further unpacking, as the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel points out in his seminal text ‘Desire and Hope’ (1967). Inspired by Christian theology, Marcel distinguishes between desire, on the one hand, which is intrinsically insatiable, impatient and does not tolerate any form of delay (1967: 280), and hope, on the other, which involves waiting. In waiting, ‘we will have to recognize the existence of a *range* which goes from inert

waiting to active waiting' (1967: 280). In instances of inert or passive waiting, there is a general feature of confidence in the outcome or, at times, perhaps an indifference to it. Hence, one is capable of biding time, and awaiting the anticipated outcome more or less patiently, without necessarily being particularly anxious about the outcome. However, in the moment this certitude is lost, an 'interior debate' arises. Such an internal tension is, according to Marcel, emblematic of active waiting. And when such an internal debate dies out we may see despair taking over, despair as the closed and inevitable outcome of a situation. Active waiting, on the other hand, keeps open what is anticipated, and therefore entails hope understood as generative of action (1967: 282). Such a conceptualization of the intricate interplay between different forms of waiting, or a range of waiting as Marcel puts it, is significant, and calls for further exploration. It is in this interplay that we find a way in the interstices of collective and individual forms of waiting, a way in between modalities of waiting that opens up for what could be called the *politics* and *poetics* of waiting (cf. Clifford and Marcus 1986).

We shall return to these dimensions of waiting in due course, but here we suggest some preliminary directions. By the politics of waiting, we refer to engagements with the structural and institutional conditions that compel people to wait. Waiting has been, and is increasingly used as, an instrument to elicit particular forms of subjectivities, or as a weapon to make existence intolerable for certain groups such as refugees and asylum seekers trying to obtain the right papers (Gaibazzi 2012; Andersson 2014a: 796). While this dimension of waiting is an important avenue for research, we argue that it must be complemented with a focus on the poetics of waiting. By the poetics of waiting, we refer to the existential affordances of being placed in temporal relations, gaps and intervals where the outcome is uncertain. Following Herzfeld's use of social poetics, we do not see this move as a matter of aestheticizing social life but rather one of situating semiotic qualities, the *active* use and reading of signs, social performances as well as ambiguities and undecidedness in the midst of human endeavours crossing individual and collective forms of action (2005: 23ff., 2016; see also 1985: 10). It is important to bring these dimensions into the conversation on waiting as we are thereby allowed to scrutinize how people in ostensibly similar conditions still experience and deal with them differently. Waiting may both forge innovation and creativity as well as destroy the persons waiting. It is this uncertain interplay that this volume sets out to explore. The central ethnographic and anthropological impetus for this edited volume is not to side with either a structural and institutional perspective or an existential one but rather to foster a conversation between them.

Politics and poetics of waiting

The very familiarity of waiting (Schweizer 2005: 778) has perhaps contributed to the relative neglect of the study of the phenomenon of waiting in a concerted manner. The anthropological and, more generally, social science literature that has focused *explicitly* on ‘waiting as a social fact’ (Eriksen 2016: 78; see also Schweizer 2008: 1) by and large remains sprawling and dispersed, in contrast to the scholarly attention devoted to time and temporality, with there being repeated calls (e.g. Conlon 2011) for the need to develop an ‘ethnography of waiting’ (Sutton et al. 2011). So far, only a limited but growing number of anthropological and ethnographic works have dealt with waiting as an analytical category in its own right. Significant works include Craig Jeffrey’s anthropological study *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India* (2010a), Javier Auyero’s sociological account *Patients of the State: The Politics of Waiting in Argentina* (2012), and Ghassan Hage’s interdisciplinary edited volume *Waiting* (2009).¹ The dominant position in this recent work has focused on ‘the politics of waiting’ (Jeffrey 2010a; Auyero 2012). Auyero’s ethnographic analysis of the extended waiting of poor people seeking state social and administrative services in Buenos Aires is inspired by a mainly Bourdieuan approach, where waiting is analysed predominantly as a technology of governance: power is effectuated through its exercise over other people’s time (Bourdieu 2000: 228) and in how they are made to wait, thereby generating particular forms of subjectivities.² Jeffrey’s incisive ethnography of ‘chronic waiting’ amongst unemployed lower middle-class young men in the Indian city of Meerut analyses waiting as a social experience as well as a basis for political mobilization and democratic politics. His work (2010a: 19–23, 2010b: 468) broadly combines a critically minded Bourdieuan approach with Paul Willis’ (1977, 2003) work on the everyday social practices of young working-class men in a British school engaged in ‘partial penetrations’ of dominant structures, thereby highlighting the mutual interplay of creative agency and broader social structures. Although it is perilous to draw neatly bounded conclusions, we could broadly say that the perspective in these works has resonances with earlier works focusing on the destitute and disadvantaged, whether from lower classes, youth, refugees or otherwise marginalized positions (e.g. Stepputat 1992; Chakrabarty 2000; Appadurai 2002; Corbridge 2004; Bayart 2007; Conlon 2007). While this analytical stance is much needed in order for us to better conceive of the ways in which the contemporary world functions, this encapsulates us in a particular way of thinking about waiting. Waiting is often used politically but it also entails facets that go beyond the domain of

politics, political mobilization and everyday micro-politics (also see for example Johnson-Hanks 2005; Mains 2007).

Waiting is arguably as old as life itself, and its genealogy, therefore, is not to be taken as congruent with politics and governance alone. Our critical addition to the existing literature here is to untie politics, governance and waiting, to enable us to explore what a poetics of waiting might look like. This being so, the objective is not to counterpose poetics to politics. Rather, inspired by James Clifford and George Marcus' seminal work on the 'inseparability' of the 'poetic and the political' in 'writing culture' (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Clifford 1986: 2), the purpose is to situate the analytical potential of the concept of waiting in a more nuanced manner by attending to the mutual interplay of these dimensions. While Hage's (2009) edited volume prefigures this, exploring waiting from a range of disciplinary perspectives, in this volume we endeavour to accomplish a more vigorous anthropological engagement by incorporating a wider range of focused and comparative ethnographic studies of waiting that allows us to see both the political usages of waiting as well as the ways in which waiting may open up for the otherwise (Povinelli 2011, 2012), thereby eliciting important critical questions. We seek to engage with a plurality of ways of being and inhabiting time as seen through the figure of waiting. In order to accomplish such a move, we work with waiting as a category that allows people's doubts and uncertainties (Engelke 2005; Pelkmans 2013) to coexist with potentials of hope (Crapanzano 2003; Hage 2003; Miyazaki 2004; Lindquist 2006; Zigon, this volume). Waiting often entails oscillations between these variegated stances; it is a form of becoming emergent in the very oscillations between doubting and hoping but also of suspending both. In the process of focusing on waiting as a conceptual lens to examine the variegated human condition, this volume also highlights waiting as a central methodological tool integral to the anthropological enterprise. It explores the politics and poetics of waiting as uncertain interplays between hoping and doubting. In so doing, it enables us to critically approach the precariousness of existence, made more urgent by current conjunctures of simultaneous waiting and speeding up across scales, a theme we return to later.

The precarious conditions of vast swathes of the world's human inhabitants offer no shortage of structurally and institutionally imposed forms of waiting.³ The destinies of large numbers of displaced people – migrants, refugees and asylum seekers – to a great extent bespeak the travails and impasses experienced in parts of the world where entire nations seem to be waiting for better times (Bayart 2007). At the time of writing, the continuing crisis in Syria offers ample evidence of how people wait for rescue in cities such as Homs and Aleppo. Or how

Syrian refugees, now in camps in neighbouring countries such as Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, await opportunities to cross the Mediterranean Sea or by other means attempt reaching Europe and other destinations or, in what for many is now a longer term perspective, to return to Syria in better and safer times. However, the Syrian crisis and the concomitant refugee situation also shows how European regulations and legislations affect the incentives of people to stay or to attempt to ride their luck en route to what are perceived as better and safer locations (cf. Schuster 2011). In general, we find that attending to the flourishing literature on migration offers abundant proof of tensions between different forms of waiting. Waiting may here be seen as an imposed form of sanctioning used to slow down movement towards Europe, for instance, a means to ward off people and keep them out by making them linger and await decisions beyond their control (Lucht 2012; Andersson 2014b). Such prolonged forms of waiting have a corrosive effect on many undocumented migrants, making their entire situation one of transience, and simultaneously a situation of scrutiny and objectification in the form of external assessments of value or experiences of personal threats in one's place of origin. Bredeloup describes the impact of forms of transit landscapes on migrants as follows (2012: 465):

Daily life passes slowly and although the waiting time is fully occupied by activities necessitated by daily survival, [it] can easily seem endless, punctuated only by occasional events which may break the ongoing routine and lead them to rearrange their route. [...] The act of waiting in transit paradoxically expands time, but compresses space for immobile individuals.

However, waiting does not merely affect people on the move but also the whole chain of relations and networks, where those not on the move themselves are also incorporated into a wider form of waiting, be that in the form of waiting for news on the successful entry of the former into the desired destination after a dangerous and clandestine travel or for oneself to embark on migration towards a desired destination (Vigh 2009; Reeves 2011; Graw and Schielke 2012; Griffiths 2013; Elliot 2016). Furthermore, once inside Europe, migrants and asylum seekers are exposed to new forms of vulnerability, where asylum is becoming increasingly tied to the needs of the labour market and, to a lesser extent, to an assessment of actual threat in the place of origin (Fassin 2013). Thus, the process of seeking asylum increasingly draws out over months, and even years, of waiting in camps and asylum centres inside as well as outside Europe (Whyte 2011; Rotter 2016).

In an ethnographic study of camps outside Europe, Agier (2002) characterizes the camps of Dadaab in northeast Kenya – with refugees from Somalia, Southern Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda – as a novel socio-spatial form: 'city-camps'.

Such city-camps are created by the coupling of war with 'humanitarian' intervention in a situation of emergency, but generally last far beyond the duration of the emergency, though politically not recognized as an enduring reality. Consequently, the housing of displaced persons and refugees in these camps creates a new category of world population and a new component of the human condition, placed in 'waiting zones' outside of society. The camp as a waiting zone outside of society (as well as the 'self-settled' sites of displaced persons and refugees on the city outskirts) is 'liminal' (cf. Turner 1969) in the sense that it remains in peripheral zones 'provisionally or illegally occupied,' with '[n]othing [...] ever [...] [being] brought to completion in these contexts' (Agier 2002: 337; also see Agamben 1998; Turner 2012), which contrasts with the variegated speeds, mobilities and temporalities in society beyond the camp.

Studies of urban slum dwellers in large parts of the world offer another window into the precariousness and uncertainty generated by structurally imposed forms of spatial and temporal waiting, especially in the 'Global South,' where neoliberal economic reforms have led to vast 'floating populations' (Bayart 2007) forced to wait for food, education, health care or shelter (Appadurai 2002; Jeffrey 2008: 954; Janeja 2014). Housing crises in cities of disposal such as Mumbai show that the 'tyranny of emergency' (Bindé 2000) prevents them from effectively building long-term assets (Appadurai 2002: 30), and compels them to live as if in a constant and immediate present, a forever 'temporary' condition.⁴ This tyranny of emergency might entail 'some degree of waiting (which is usually lived as "impatience")' but it has a temporal structure that obstructs any kind of long-term perspective, accompanied by the prospect or promise of a subsequent stage that would effectively facilitate the development of alternatives to the situation (Procupez 2015: S56), and thus excludes the possibility of a 'plan' (cf. Abram and Weszkalnys 2011).⁵ Furthermore, as Procupéz shows in her historically informed ethnographic study of poor urban families in Buenos Aires residing 'temporarily' in government-subsidized 'welfare hotels,' the recipients of housing subsidies have to meet specific strict criteria delineated by state regulation, in turn redefined by different administrations at different points in time, and substantiate it with documents in order to qualify as 'needy' and requiring assistance in a 'housing emergency.' Auyero's ethnographic study, referred to earlier, also depicts how and why welfare clients in Buenos Aires become disempowered 'patients of the state,' with their compliance emerging as the outcome of incorporating domination in what he describes as the politics of waiting (Auyero 2012: 155; but see also Mathur 2014).

However, drawing on Hage (2009), Procupez points out that what is overlooked in this portrayal of the politics of waiting is the fact that modalities of waiting are shaped not only by those who make others wait, but also by those who wait. She thus shows how the aforementioned recipients of housing subsidies organized themselves into community-based housing grassroots organizations, which subsequently developed more encompassing demands, e.g. access to public funding for collective housing projects to be directly administered by the participants themselves, which would enable them to find affordable ways of becoming legal residents while actively contributing to the construction projects with their own labour. This process of collective organizing requires patience as a necessary disposition, not only for negotiating bureaucratic delays and peer disagreements, but also for coping with the prospect of future change. Patience here is a political stance that involves a shift in perspective from the immediate to the longterm. It is better understood as an active engagement with, or a 'new experience of inhabiting time [which] combines both urgency and restraint', a collective mode of being or disposition toward 'the experience of temporality within a project-based politics'. Thus, for Procupez, patience here is 'waiting while working to make something happen, it is [reluctant] hope and the formation of a collective subjectivity' (2015: S56–S64).

The capacity of people to transform their needs into a collective claim, and to patiently work to organize themselves into a long-term project that endeavours to confront and solve this claim, constitutes and becomes, for Appadurai (2002: 28–30; 2013a: 126–127), a 'politics of patience'. Delineating this as fundamental to democratic citizenship and participation ('deep democracy'), he describes the politics of patience as a slow collaborative process that entails practices of accommodation, negotiation, long-term asset building and cumulative change rather than a politics of confrontation. When the unhoused or underhoused millions in Mumbai – or Calcutta or Durban – mobilize to demand better housing, they know they must prepare to wait for unascertained periods of years or even decades, in the face of uncertainty created by real estate development as well as state-sponsored demolition. Hoping for change in this context rests on negotiating emergency and urgency with patience, which requires the 'capacity to aspire', defined as a capacity that is 'a navigational one [...] that allows people to make their way from more proximate needs to more distant aspirational worlds' (Appadurai 2013a: 213). But this cultural capacity to aspire or hope for possible futures, Appadurai points out, is unequally distributed among wealthier and poorer communities (also see Hage 2003, 2016: 466–467), calling for scaled exercises in building and nurturing this capacity as a collective asset amongst

the latter. This is illustrated by the daily organizational work and public rituals of the SPARC Alliance, a coalition of an NGO and two slum-based groups that has led a wide range of neighbourhood development interventions in Mumbai's slums by working on non-confrontational collaborations with local state and international development agencies. 'Politically organised hope thus produces in bare citizens the internal resources to see themselves as active participants in the arduous process of waiting; it converts the passive "waiting for" into the active "waiting to": waiting to make the next move in the queue and ultimately to claim the full rights of citizenship' (Appadurai 2013b: 13).

Like collective patience, individual endurance gets intertwined with hope (and despair), and might elicit pity and compassion as well. Kwon (2015) describes how, for Korean Chinese migrants moving to South Korea and their families who wait behind, waiting has emerged as an essential activity, a form of unpaid affective work that requires the capacity to endure loneliness to maintain a stable love life and the flow of remittances in the midst of hope, anxiety and uncertainty. A figure such as Penelope may also be worth pondering over here. Penelope awaits Ulysses' return, weaving by day and unravelling the weave by night, and hence indexes not merely a passive form of surrender to circumstances but an active form of endurance amidst the most mundane of chores. In her efforts Penelope cannot be reduced merely to a subject that evokes pity. Rather, she keeps her hope alive in her patient resilience. The figure of Penelope therefore bespeaks how we cannot situate waiting merely in a frame of suffering but rather must attend to the variegated responses to lived historical circumstances and concrete situations. Therefore, we see a pertinent call in Joel Robbins' analytical move to go beyond the suffering subject (Robbins 2013). Where despair, ruin and pain all are prevalent figures in the contemporary world, an anthropological engagement ought to explore such situations as diverse forms of interacting with the world. In Arendt's conception, we need to be cautious with accounts that rest solely on pity (1990 [1963]: 70, 85–88). Pity may heighten the awareness of the predicament of the other, but while doing so it presents the other as remote. Passion, and compassion, by contrast engage with the other and minimize distance. In attending to the poignant making, unmaking and remaking of lifeworlds, an anthropologically ethnographic engagement needs to address more than pity, so that we can learn something through the different ways the world is being negotiated, lived, endured and acted upon (see also Boltanski 1999; Sennett 2003: 142ff.; Jackson 2005: 154; Gullestad 2007: 22). It is therefore pertinent that we attend to the temporalities at play in the phenomenon of waiting, and in the discipline of anthropology.

Waiting with or without an end – temporalities and waiting

In the anthropological record, temporality has been a central theme, ranging from Evans-Pritchard's study of Nuer time-reckoning (1939), and studies of waiting as deferral between exchanges as critical to a gift (Mauss 2000 [1925]; Gregory 1982) to the interrogation of the time of self and other (Fabian 1983; Dalsgaard and Nielsen 2013) and the renewed interest in recent discussions on rupture and continuity (Robbins 2007; but see also Meyer 1998; Engelke 2010). A key theme in one recent formulation has been Joel Robbins' argument that anthropology as a discipline has predominantly been a discipline of continuity (2007). By examining Christian categories of time as central to the formation of modern conceptions of time, Robbins argues that Christianity breaks with the past and affords rupture as a central model for social change. One of the central places where such a model is found is in conversions. In converting, individuals come to see their past in a new light, and more or less actively dissociates it from past practices and convictions. Conversion, however, is not merely a matter of acting upon the past but also of coming to anticipate a particular present and future. Robbins presents this as follows (2007: 12):

Much of the imagery of a rupture in life's normal time line that is present in many models of conversion is also given elaborate and explicit treatment in discourses on the coming of the millennium. The watchful waiting for a messiah who will come like a thief in the night that many Christians enjoy on one another is premised on the idea that at any moment a future could arrive totally independent of the causal thrust of the present.

For Robbins' interlocutors in Papua New Guinea, this means that the entire Urapmin community, after a collective conversion to Christianity, lives in a state of expectation, waiting watchfully and vigilantly for the second coming of the Messiah, ready to seize or be seized by radical change (2004: 303). For the Urapmin, millennial expectation oscillates between everyday concern and talk about Christ's second coming, and then at times engages with more marked and heightened ritual practice to prepare themselves individually and collectively for this event (see also Robbins 2001: 527ff.). Other recent ethnographies have shown how followers of various strands of Christianity are situated in relation to the future or, vis-à-vis engagement with – or perhaps rather disengagement from – politics. Hence, Jane Guyer argues that a loss of near future can be found with Christians living in light of Christ's second coming (2007), and Jon Bialecki delineates how the capacity to act and deal with politics risks becoming

meaningless if what to strive for is placed outside or beyond this world, and rather in the world to come (2009).

Although Robbins' cogent reflections on Christian models of time in relation to rupture, discontinuity, and the event are not uncontested (see, for example, Hann and Goltz 2010; Lazar 2014; Tomlinson 2014), it is possible to extend this line of inquiry further, since studies of Christianity offer an interesting avenue for exploring different modalities of waiting and various configurations of relations towards the end of time. Robbins himself draws upon Walter Benjamin's famous text 'Theses on the History of Philosophy' where the latter argues against the idea of progress as such (1999b: 252; see also Robbins 2010, 2011). The experience of the past is always carried onward at the brink of destruction and in moments of danger, and hence, it is important to dismantle the ideology of progress as if humanity exists in empty homogeneous time. To Benjamin – as well as Robbins – it is important to be open for messianic moments in time. For Robbins, the important point is that change may not always come as a discrete and continuous process as something merely happening in time but rather when something happens to time itself (2007: 9). For Benjamin, this is part of a meditation on how empty homogeneous time is always filled by the time of the now, *jetzt-Zeit*, and the irruption of the unexpected also, perhaps especially in moments of danger and destruction (XIV). Time in this sense is constantly open to the return of the Messiah. But in Benjamin such a return causes trembling as well as hope because catastrophe and liberation here are tied together (cf. Taussig 2006).

The figure of the second coming of Christ, *parousia*, an important theme in Christian thought more widely, connotes hope, but also the end of the world as we know it. Reinhart Koselleck may be instructive here in his original engagement with the semantics of modern time in his *Futures Past* (2004, German original 1979). In this work, he reflects on the categories of time, and most significantly, on the relation between spaces of experience and horizons of expectation in the formation of historical time. Koselleck is preoccupied with western conceptions of time, where Christianity is a central figure to reckon with. In Christian history, time was eschatological. Time had a beginning and an end. Christ had, by his coming, inserted a particular orientation in time as an already, not yet. Koselleck formulates this insight eloquently (2004: 11): 'Until well into the sixteenth century, the history of Christianity is a history of expectations, or more exactly, the constant anticipation of the End of the World on the one hand and the continual deferment of the End on the other.' In this formulation, what we see is that Christianity gave rise to a particular historical conception of time as linear, but it also inserted a particular set of expectations

toward the time to come and the end of this world. As the first Christians awaited the second coming as imminent, attested quite clearly by the letters of Paul, they saw their life in a particular light, e.g. did it make sense to marry or to collect earthly belongings if Christ was to return in the next moment? Thus, in this sense some things were less relevant, than others, to carry out, if Christ was to return imminently. However, with the passage of time, the Church came to be suspended between Christ's first and second coming, and thereby regularized the expectations of the time to come (Koselleck 2004: 13; see also Reinhardt, this volume). The Church had to obtain a delicate balance between the hope of *parousia* and the threat of the end.

A further extension of the legacy of Pauline thinking is to be found in Giorgio Agamben's exploration, in *The Time that Remains* (2005 [2000]).⁶ Agamben describes Paul as an apostle, and not a prophet, because of his relationship to time. The prophet speaks from the perspective of the people waiting for the coming of the Messiah, reading the signs of his coming in the events experienced. The apostle, by contrast, speaks from a different position, namely that of the arrival of the Messiah. The time of the prophet is that of the future, while the time of the apostle is that of the present. And for Agamben the time that interests the apostle is not the end of time but rather the ending of time; the time that remains between time and its end (2005 [2000]: 62). Therefore, for Agamben neither the instant nor the continuum are apt metaphors for messianic time (see also Agamben 2007 [1978]). Messianic time is rather to be understood as the interstice or gap opened by the already not yet, that salvation has already arrived but is yet to be fulfilled. In Agamben's conception, this amounts to an additional or transitional time. That is to say, secular time, or *chronos*, is interlaced with something else, namely *kairos*, decisive moments with the potentiality of the irruption of the unexpected. To live life as 'already, not yet' implies that waiting becomes a critical component of existence as characterized by a charged attitude, in that one is living a life in anticipation.

But such anticipation may not be directed or specified vis-à-vis defined ends. Perhaps it is precisely this lack of specification that allows waiting to become a critical resource unbound from pre-existing coordinates (see also Frederiksen, this volume). Such a form of perseverance is proposed in the critical work of Jacques Derrida and his meditations on the figure of messianism. In his *Specters of Marx*, he engages with the 'messianic', as he prefers to call it (2004 [1993]: 210), as a form of 'waiting without a horizon of expectation' (2004 [1993]: 211). Derrida in this sense talks of the messianic without messianism, an open waiting for the future without fixed coordinates. In this understanding, the messianic

would stop being messianic, if it was no longer a form of hesitation in the face of the time to come. Thus, the messianic here becomes a cipher for an irresolvable waiting that keeps open the possibility of meeting the future. Waiting here is devoid of a specified end.

Temporalities, modernities and crises

As anthropologists, we are well aware that much of our discipline has had a particular history of resting on Christian or western framings of many of our concepts. Mindful of Talal Asad's injunction, we are not aiming for an uncritical use of such concepts and understandings as indexical of some kind of universal history (1993). Rather, the genealogical work involved in setting straight the formation of many of the concepts of our discipline, and unbinding them from their Western historical underpinnings and Christian legacies, invites us to revisit the onset of modernity in Europe and North America, with a view to engaging with how these particular historical trajectories of modernity have impacted on understandings and experiences of time and temporalities in the 'West' as well as the 'Global South', the latter understood as postcolonial Africa, Asia, Meso and South America, and frequently perceived as occupying the 'waiting room of history' (Chakrabarty 2000: 256), although parts of it are now 'emerging'.

We begin by returning to Koselleck's work. Koselleck delineates how western modernity creates novel spaces of experiences and horizons of expectations that depart from Christian eschatology. For him, modernity is characterized by a secularization of time (2004: 265). Time and ideas of the end are untied from a religious horizon, and the collective figuring of the future becomes that of a politics of man's making instead. To Koselleck, this is a new and different plane of historical time. Modernity, for him, is characterized by an acceleration or speeding up (2004: 3, 11, 50). But also by a secularization of time in that prophecy becomes obsolete, and finds its contrasting replacement in prognosis and rational planning of time (2004: 19, 265). Central components in this portrayal of western history are events such as the Reformation, the Thirty Year War and the French Revolution, which in various ways made human activity – and not divine providence – the scale to reckon with. With these significant events in western history, the future became open to human planning and intervention (see also Arendt 1990 [1963]: 55; Arendt 1993 [1968]: 65). Associated with this modernity came ideas of progress and process as dominant idioms for grasping people's experiences of time as well as conceptualizations of history.

Where such seamless accounts of modernity have long been questioned anthropologically and ethnographically for their ethnocentric and allochronistic bias (e.g. Wolf 1982; Fabian 1983: 32ff.; Miller 1994; Arce and Long 2000; Englund and Leach 2000), it still seems that pertinent themes need further unravelling. On the one hand, modernity needs to be pluralized as people have never just lived the same form of modernity, but rather multiple modernities. On the other hand, as argued by Michel Serres (Serres and Latour 1995 [1990]: 61), and later furthered by Bruno Latour ([1993]), humans have 'never been modern'. Or perhaps, the distribution between what is perceived as modern time and what is not attests to the different temporal planes in which human activity is inscribed. One intervention that points us in this direction is found in Laura Bear's recent engagement with what she designates the anthropology of modern time (2014). Bear argues that modern time has not yet been understood and explored anthropologically. One of her central contentions is thus that we need to explore how modern time persists as a central epistemological underpinning to local conceptions of time, also when various rhythms and social times are placed hierarchically in relation to it. In other words, modern time organizes different social times. In this sense, even though modernity is not as seamless as the accounts Arendt and Koselleck would suggest, it still organizes horizons of expectation and spaces of experience. Bear, without dealing with Arendt and Koselleck, seems to point in the same direction in that she argues that modern time, instead of being a harbinger of progress, is also rife with doubt. In her formulation (Bear 2014: 6): 'Modern time is characterized by unprecedented doubt about, and conflict in, representations of time.' We will return to the configurations of doubt again shortly but here consider the characteristics of the organization of modern time further.

The characteristics of modern time centrally revolve around particular orderings of time. Hence, the clock and the calendar have been instrumental in organizing the lives of individuals and collectives in their function as social forms of discipline, regimented routines, and technologies of the imagination (see Benjamin 1999; Foucault 1991 [1975]; Benjamin 1999; Weber 2013 [1922]). Modernity thereby advanced a particular organization of time and planning where abstract time materialized people's practices and experiences. Agamben formulates this as follows (1993 [1978]: 105): 'The modern concept of time is a secularization of rectilinear, irreversible Christian time, albeit sundered from any notion of end and emptied of any other meaning but that of structured process in terms of before and after.' Modern factories and modern cities can be seen as emblematic markers of such forms of time. Here the notion of modern time has

often been paired with industrial time, where efficiency, work and productivity laid claims to the time of labourers, and also produced novel spaces of both leisure and dead time (see also Thompson 1967; Giddens 1991). The history of modern time is, therefore, also the history of social organization, where abstract time and regulation by the state are institutionalized. The modern focus on progress and efficiency also produces its antinomies, namely what falls out or needs to be controlled, be it in the form of bureaucracy and paper work (Blom Hansen 2005; Navaro-Yashin 2007), legal regulation (de Genova 2002) or novel technological forms of control and auditing (Power 1997; Strathern 2000). Modernity did not obliterate different experiences of time but it organized social time in relation to more regularized schemes of production. Moreover, as Jeffrey (2008: 955) points out, the institutionalization of chronological time associated with the onset of modernity in Europe and North America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was also accompanied by particular understandings of 'how social lives should be mapped onto chronological time [becoming] enshrined in new laws and public institutions: childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age came to be viewed as distinct stages of life' (also see Johnson-Hanks 2002). Moreover, notions of school careers and adult (usually male) working careers became ubiquitous (Cole and Durham 2008: 6), with such visions of time and social ageing being promoted in many parts of the 'Global South' during the colonial and post-colonial periods (Ruddick 2003; also Comaroff and Comaroff 1991).

Furthermore, modernity also gave rise to a sense of acceleration and speeding up, as argued by Koselleck. This feature has also been highlighted in the space-time compression that globalization gives rise to (Harvey 1990; Robertson 1992). Here acceleration seems to be one significant vector, where more information, digitalization and economic circuits pace expectations and hopes. People's hopes for better futures and particular futurities here are catapulted onwards (Virilio 1977; Eriksen 2001; Tomlinson 2008; Rosa 2013), and the ability to wait for one's turn seems to have become scarce in a technological landscape of immediacy. Thus, central perhaps to the contemporary experience of waiting is how it becomes intolerable with the technological and digital ways of speeding up social relationships, for instance, via mobile phones, Twitter, Facebook and Snapchat. Here we also see the growth of possibilities of civic strife and conflict, when imaginaries are fed by both corroborated as well as uncorroborated rumours (e.g. the recent emergence of the phenomenon of 'fake news') that demand action. The exhaustion of such imaginaries has the corollary in the late modern sense of crisis and fatigue, and even a loss of perspective. David Scott draws on some of the same insights when, in *Omens of Adversity*, he talks of the Grenada

revolution gone awry (2014). For moderns, Scott posits, temporality has been revolving around the unfolding of historical time that is a progressive succession of instants. Here even secular Enlightenment has a particular conception of change as tied to fulfilment, as Scott says (2014: 5): 'Secular Enlightenment change is pictured as temporal movement in which, with regular periodicity, the future overcomes the past, and in which the present is a state of expectation and waiting for the fulfillment of the promise of social and political improvement.' However, this mood or anticipation of a better and more just time to come has been paused, and more pessimistic sentiments have emerged and taken hold in recent years, so much so that in Japan, for instance, this has even led to the emergence of 'Hope Studies' (Hage 2016; also see Miyazaki 2004, 2006). We are left with what Scott calls 'aftermaths'. In a similar vein, Janet Roitman talks of crisis as being the recent figure of thought, but crisis not as a moment in time but rather an extended condition (2014). Therefore we find a reversal of the classic meaning of crisis as a point of decision to an extended situation of indecision. Modernity, therefore, while presenting possibilities for human planning and prognosis also elicits fundamental doubts and misgivings (Arendt 1993 [1968]: 54; Bear 2014), which we now turn to.

Doubt, uncertainty and hope

One of the central insights of this book is that waiting as a phenomenon is an unstable object. Waiting is not to be found merely in the absence of action but in an uncertain terrain where what is hoped for may or may not occur. Periods of waiting release diverse affects ranging from hope, enthusiasm and urgency to apathy, paralysis and lethargy. As a consequence, waiting opens up for a variegated field of responses, or to follow up on Marcel's (1967) argument at the beginning of our Introduction, a range that goes from inert and passive waiting to active waiting. This in Gasparini's work (1995: 29ff.) leads to a focus on the semantic range of the term 'waiting'. He sees a fundamental interrelatedness between 'waiting' and more or less marked forms of attention. Whatever has placed an individual or a collective in a situation of waiting, such a situation elicits diverse attitudes, and often leads to existential questions and doubts. Hence, an exploration of the figures of doubt, uncertainty and hope is critical for us to better conceive of waiting as a social phenomenon.

Hage has, in several of his works, interrogated the ways hope, struggle and movement impact on the sense of well-being of individuals as well as collectives.

He examines the search for hope alongside the feelings of being 'stuck' and devoid of options to change one's predicament (Hage 2003), with stuckedness characterized by invisibility, immobility, uncertainty and arbitrariness. Here Hage accords a central place to the notion of existential mobility as a way of understanding various forms of movement (Hage 2005). Hence it is critical that one feels that one is moving somewhere in life, and the lack of such prospects may force actual physical movement to happen (see Mains 2007). Accordingly, both active and passive forms of waiting are important to interrogate also amidst current forms of crisis and dystopia (Hage 2009, 2015; also see Eriksen and Bendixen, this volume). In Hage's terminology there is an important marking out of such diverse forms of waiting, in his play with the prepositions following on from waiting. Are people waiting *for* something or are they waiting *out* their given travails. In his formulation (2015: 41): 'Waiting out is a specific form of waiting where one is not waiting for something but rather waiting for something undesirable that has to come, like a spell of cold weather or a disliked guest, to end or to go.' Therefore, Hage sees the potential for radical forms of change and revolutionary action as waning, where the new heroes are paragons of resilience, and frequently less inclined towards progressive politics, thought and revolutionary change.

Like waiting, doubt is a theme that has seldom figured prominently in the anthropological literature as an object of inquiry in its own right. Conversely, the disciplinary record abounds with studies of people's beliefs, ideologies and convictions, and – more recently – ontologies. It seems that through the years it has been more prevalent to describe and theorize figures such as these as relatively stable rather than to interrogate their formation as uncertain and labile forms of becoming (Engelke 2005; Taussig 2006; Bandak 2012; Pelkmans 2013; Bubandt 2014). For our purposes here, what we need to unravel are the relations between doubt, uncertainty and hope vis-à-vis waiting. Doubt and uncertainty unfold in the temporal sequences that are untied from a certain outcome. This is precisely what the relationship to time and expected ends affords when actors are waiting. To be sure there are a lot of things that we take for granted in that we do not even register them as embedded in our experience of waiting. Waiting for one's tea to brew during a working day may not present a particularly uncertain outcome; it may rather offer a welcome break for a couple of minutes where one relaxes before resuming work. Such forms of waiting for quotidian things may not therefore release doubt or uncertainty for most people. They are seen as routine matters.

When such routines are broken, matters may unfold otherwise or some rather different emotions may emerge. If we are used to a computer starting up

within a period of time we have come to perceive and expect as reasonable, it can be enormously frustrating, infuriating even, to have to wait for the machine to restart due to new updates or if the hard drive is hard pressed. In such a situation, even if we may be talking about just a few seconds or moments spent waiting, it can feel like forever. What we learn from such a mundane example, which probably will be recognizable to most readers, is that clock time and experienced time rarely coincide. Unexpected waiting most often can be experienced as irritating, as if time itself is stretched out and prolonged. On other occasions, time seems to fly at a pace we cannot really comprehend. Such forms of experienced rapidity are often found in the face of making more serious decisions, situations where one could have asked for more time (cf. Flaherty 2011; Frederiksen and Dalsgård 2014). Furthermore, there are situations such as the one discussed by Schweizer (2008: 121), which describes the experiences of waiting endured by the parents of a dying boy, to illustrate a waiting for 'that which (cannot) be waited for', where 'waiting is simply an endurance of time that falls away from illusory circuits of meaning and intent' (Bissell 2009: 411).

This disjuncture between clock time and experienced time was profoundly captured by the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859–1945) in his two first books, *Time and Free Will* (1913 [1889]) and *Matter and Memory* (1988 [1896]). Bergson aptly formulated the distinction between these forms of time as a matter of the duration and the physicist's time (1988 [1896]: 272): 'The duration lived by our consciousness is a duration with its own determined rhythm, a duration very different from the time of the physicist.' In contrast to the positivist ideals reigning at the time, Bergson in his early works examined how human perception never exists in empty space. It rather exists in a time already saturated with memories. Time as experienced by the human consciousness is marked as duration in time. Bergson makes a central distinction between qualitative and quantitative orderings of time, and places movement as a central component in time experience as it attests both to mental as well as mechanical forms of direction. Bergson accordingly sees various emotional attitudes as related directly to time. Sorrow, joy and hope, in this conception, are all related to either open or closed vistas, where duration is freely oriented towards the future or is sealed off, bound to the past. Social time, therefore, is not to be equated with measurable time units but rather as an experiential dimension of social life, which may only partially be measured by the watch and clock time (see also Gell 1992: 286ff.; Munn 1992: 94ff.; Hodges 2008; Schweizer 2008).

Tim Ingold formulates a similar insight in his phenomenological anthropology: 'In a sense, clock time is as alien to us as it is to the Nuer, the only difference is

that we have to contend with it' (2000: 338). What Ingold brings home is that human beings rarely orient themselves to abstract time; they are instead oriented towards activities and socially informed tasks. In Ingold's conception, however, this insight also comes packaged with a romanticized notion of experiential time. In his preoccupation with experienced time, clock time appears to be marking only the alienation of human beings and outer representational schemes of temporality. This may be too general a perspective, as clock time and temporal regulations can also be productive in giving direction and impetus to complete one's endeavours. Deadlines can, as many of us know, cause unease and guilt (Rosa 2013) but also encourage productivity, the thrill and excitement of getting things done, and even at times generate energizing-accelerative moments of research conduct, thought and serendipitous discoveries (cf. Bachelard 2000: 88; Vostal 2015) or the experience of work as flow (cf. Csikszentmihalyi 1992; Ingold 2000).

A more ethnographically informed analysis may reveal how the concrete experience of time also relates to what is in one's own hands and what is beyond. A significant avenue of studies in this regard has been found in the engagement with prisons: what Avery Gordon designates as 'prison time' (2011), and what Adam Reed has termed as 'hope on remand' (2011). In these respective works, we see different configurations of time and hope with regard to what is perceived as the immanence or indeterminacy of waiting. In Reed's work on Bomana, the largest penal institution in Papua New Guinea, there is a marked difference between convicts and those on remand. Before the trial, remand inmates prepare for their case and cling to the hope of not ending up with a longer spell in prison. Consequently, they focus on the near future and attend to signs that may allow them to read the most likely outcome. On remand, most live in the hope of a positive outcome of their trial. However, when the sentence is delivered, life is transformed, and those having their future decided as proper inmates live with altogether evanescent forms of hope. Or as Reed (2011: 541) concludes: 'Wearing the prison uniform, shaved, and with hair cut short, they are often unrecognizable from the men I knew on remand. Abandoned by hope, they become hopeless.' Drawing on Hage, Reed sees this as a difference between waiting *for* and waiting *out*. Before the trial, the perspective is not closed and one can actively imagine a life outside the confined space of the prison; this perspective is transformed when the sentence is given. Similarly, Gordon describes how fate and fatalism are recurring figures in a US prison context, where prisoners are rendered as people without futures, forced to live in what is made to look like an incessant repetition of the same routines, of endless sameness (2011: 13–14). Here the

penal system robs the incarcerated of their space as well as their time and control of when to carry out many of life's most intimate details. The relation to time changes, and this happens most frequently also in relation to the length and perspective of the sentence given.

What we see here is that the sense of control over time and space also elicits various forms of responses. As long as there are things to plan for, things that one believes or hopes will affect one's circumstances, activities seem filled with purpose and direction. When this is no longer the case, mundane chores and activities can be perceived as tedious and boring. The figures of repetition, monotony, tedium and boredom are hence prevalent figures when life does not seem to have a purposeful direction (Mains 2007; Schielke 2008; Frederiksen 2013; Kublitz 2016). Boredom experienced by young unemployed men in urban Ethiopia, for instance, as unstructured, potentially dangerous, and overabundant time to be 'passed' or 'killed', and as an inability to 'progress in the form of desirable social relations with others', can cause stress, depression, unease and frustration (Mains 2007: 666–667). Such situations may, however, not only be framed as corrosive, but may also be conducive to thought and creativity (also see the section below on Waiting as a method). Situations of waiting also have the potential to create novel forms of socialities, rituals and gendered sociabilities (Hoek 2014; Hussain 2014; Jeffrey 2010a, 2010b; Mains 2007; Cook 2014). Waiting can generate 'waithood' (Honwana 2012) – the combination of 'wait' and 'adulthood' – as an undefined period in young Africans' lives for instance, suspended between childhood and effective adulthood in its socially expected form, during which youth engage in creative ways of interacting in society, ranging from survival strategies to criminal activities (Honwana 2012; Honwana and De Boeck 2005). Waiting can constitute an active attempt to invest in and realize imagined, and at times incommensurable, futures (Chua 2014; Ibanez-Tirado 2014; Kwon 2015), a kind of future-making strategy, and 'skilful waiting' that can produce 'temporal subjects' suited to the speed and contingencies of late capitalism (Chua 2011: 117, 131). Conversely, urgency, impatience and haste may be seen in situations where serious diseases such as cancer require treatment, where one may not be able to afford waiting for test results (Day 2015). The waiting room in a hospital – one of the associated images that the cover of this book brings to mind – therefore emblematically attests to the various imaginings elicited by such waiting time. The scenarios and prospects of what the actual wait will lead to, therefore, work back on the present situation, and this only more so when time is a critical factor in treating an afflicted person or an emergency.

A central theme that arises here is that of control (Gasparini 1995): who is able to act on time, and who is acted upon. In the work of Arendt and also Michael Jackson it is the capacity and experience of being able to act, and being acted upon, that is pivotal to a sense of well-being as well as agency (Arendt 1998; Jackson 2002, 2005; cf. Janeja 2010; also see Allison, this volume). Here some element of planning and a sense of control over one's time are important but rarely does one encounter a social situation that can be tamed completely. Schwartz's (1974: 858) distinction between waiting *for* and waiting *on* is instructive here. Waiting *for* describes a situation such as being stuck in a queue where one has little power vis-à-vis an institution, when there are scarce resources that result in waiting times coinciding with how power is distributed (Schwartz 1974). Waiting *on*, however, is choosing when to wait and when to act, a momentary 'putting to one side', a type of waiting that indexes agency. Building on this insight, Minnegal (2009: 91) writes: 'We wait *on* other subjects. There is always an interlocutor in such waiting [...] And the performance that results from this engagement is crucially shaped by the way that waiting – as reciprocal attention – is exchanged.' Thus, in the relational worlds we inhabit, we find an uncertain interplay between control and its lack, between a politics and poetics of waiting. It is our contention that anthropology is well equipped to explore this interplay, as waiting is also integral to the ethnographic method fundamental to our discipline.

Waiting as a method

At the very outset of this Introduction, we drew attention to the fact that waiting as an ethnographic 'object' in social and cultural anthropology has long been waiting, until recently, to be addressed in its own right. Paradoxically though, since its very inception, the anthropological enterprise has hinged on waiting as a tool and method, with Malinowski's waiting (albeit a form of forced waiting) on the Trobriand Islands becoming transformed into ethnographic fieldwork, grounding his now classic work and ethnographic texts, which have been foundational to the discipline itself. It would, therefore, be worthwhile to reflect on the implications of this legacy for the craft of anthropology. At times, the most important insights arise out of serendipity, from which 'good' ethnography and engaged anthropology come about. Such reflections are pertinent here since the anthropologically ethnographic method rests on various modalities of waiting; as anthropologists we work, plan and deal with the unexpected but also wait, in the conduct of our fieldwork and the crafting of our analyses.

Ethnography, and what we call ethnographic waiting, takes place both in time and also as a relationship to time(s). Ethnography emerges in and by waiting: not just *waiting out* time but a skilled form of waiting as ‘active and intentional’ (Bissell 2007), ‘an active, conscious, materialized practice’ in which new ideas, strategies and actions are forged, ‘in which time and space often become the objects of reflection’ (Jeffrey 2008: 957). ‘Doing’ ethnography entails variegated forms of waiting – waiting for research funding to materialize; waiting for interlocutors to show up while engaging in fieldwork as ‘deep hanging out’ (Geertz 1998); waiting for the serendipitous – that which is valued because it cannot be predicted either in the conduct of fieldwork or in the process of writing. Ethnographic waiting also includes short, medium and longer term engagements with field notes (and head notes/mind notes, filed notes, older field notes; see, for example, Sanjek 1990; also see Whyte 2013); letting ideas, projects and questions in waiting mature (like old wine and ripened cheese), and arranging and ‘purifying’ them in the form of longer or shorter written ethnographic texts such as monographs or articles; conducting longitudinal research – ‘itself a form of waiting’ (Jeffrey 2008: 957). These various configurations of waiting across multiple spatio-temporal scales are constituted by a plurality of actions and inactions, processes, practices and perceptions, variegated stances or energies of hope, boredom (Dunn 2004; Driessen 2013; Sjørsløv 2013; also see Bielo and Coleman in this volume), anxiety, doubt or uncertainty, that always hold the tantalizing potential of unfolding in other ways. The temporal trajectories of ethnographic waiting entail oscillations between these various processes, practices and stances, and ethnographic theory, practice and writing as craftsmanship are emergent in these very oscillations. Clara Han’s insightful study of waiting as care, which uses longitudinal ethnographic research (1999–2008) in a working-class neighbourhood in Santiago, is instructive here. Following a poor extended family, her study shows how women make lateral uses of credit taken from beyond the home to generate a time for waiting within it, enabling them to care for mentally ill and addicted kin through this active waiting that draws its hope from ‘the possible’ (2011: 8–9, 25), although the limits of such care through the temporality of infinitely responsive waiting are also manifested in, for instance, forms of domestic violence and illness. Methodologically, she argues, ‘How we, as anthropologists, come to see [...] fleeting moves, [...] small affective enactments and temporary destructions of a world, depends in large measure on our own movement in time with those with whom we work’ (2011: 26).

Thus, the ‘ethnographic self’ enmeshed simultaneously in precarious networks of waiting and speeding up across variegated scales needs to be addressed. On

the one hand, there are the transformations elicited by the corporeal practices of waiting and the bodily demands made by a plethora of technologies such as laptops, iPads, smart phones and so on, that the contemporary ethnographer has come to rely upon. Such technologies are used to arguably facilitate productive mobile forms of waiting while in transit at ‘non-places’ (Augé 1992) such as airports, en route perhaps to the next field-site or conference, and may crystallize in another paper abstract being sent off, the final sentences of an ethnographic text suddenly ‘making sense’, the umpteenth email ‘being done’, or another ‘ethnographic moment’ (Strathern 1999) being snapped up on a smartphone camera. However, the very technologies that are supposed to speed things up for the ethnographer, to eliminate waiting so as to save time and offer reassurance and security, instead bring forth unpredictable and unanticipated forms of waiting: waiting for the turning wheel on the computer screen to stop, the waiting for things ‘to load’, the frustration and anxiety when the internet connection or the ‘back-up’ do not work, and one has to call the computer ‘help-desk’ but an automated voice tells us we are ‘in the queue’ and ‘thanks’ us for our ‘patience’. The speeding up of ethnographic waiting has not necessarily led to a shrinking but rather a proliferation of emergent modes of waiting.⁷

On the other hand, the increasing regimentation and bureaucratization of time, the ‘explosion of audit cultures’ (Powers 1999; Strathern 2000) and their growing reach in the form of ‘outputs’, ‘excellence’, and the ‘impact factor’ constantly measured anew (Burrows 2012; Vostal 2015) – across disciplines including anthropology and the academic profession more generally (e.g. Ylijoki and Mäntylä 2003; Levy 2007; Berg and Seeber 2016) – have changed the nature of anthropological craftsmanship’s relationship to the temporal rhythms of waiting. The temporalities of waiting critical to – the translation of data into information, and further into knowledge; the deliberate and patient production of ethnography; the processes of imagination, flight, maturation or ‘the nesting of ideas’ (Benjamin 1999: 90; cf. Bandak and Kuzmanovic 2015) and retrospection as fundamental to analysis; the transformation of ethnographic boredom into productive engagement – have been increasingly put under pressure in a neoliberal era where people are not being allowed to wait. With everything being accelerated vis-à-vis productivist discourses of speed and efficiency, we are being compelled (or are we?) to unlearn the craft of close attention and the conventions of attending to something with patience. Instead we are increasingly being pushed into a hurried disdain for detail that reins in the freedom to think, fences in the imagination, and undermines, or at least works contrary to, sedimented forms of learning and emergent knowledge-making.

Ruptures of the traditional ideals of the temporalities of waiting in anthropological research and challenges to the explicit norms and forms of the doing of ethnography are analysed by George Marcus (2013) in the following manner. He highlights various sources of anxiety regarding the relative slowness of ethnography in the constantly shifting space-time contexts and emergent assemblages of sites, things and persons that characterize a now growing 'anthropology of the contemporary' (cf. Rabinow 2008; Rabinow et al. 2008). Firstly, the desire to be relevant to various publics beyond those specific publics – that are defined by the process of ethnographic research itself and to which anthropology could more realistically aspire to be relevant – creates pressures on the norms and practices of a temporality of patience pivotal to the identity of being an ethnographer. It makes the ethnographer anxious about the belated forms in which ethnographic results are produced, 'belated' since 'the pacing and tempo by which ethnography is produced still conforms to the traditional norm of taking one's (almost unlimited) time' (Marcus 2013: 149–150; parentheses in the original). Secondly, the conflicts of temporalities in key collaborative relationships of ethnographic work in an anthropology of the contemporary is another dimension of the ethnographic anxiety of being relatively slow, e.g. a lawyer or consultant counterpart of the ethnographer may harness a significant concept or insight far more quickly than the ethnographer who may want to 'take her time' to develop it. Given the rise of 'the present professional culture for the production of ethnography' thus outlined, Marcus also draws attention to the predicament that many anthropologists of the contemporary, especially younger scholars starting their careers, find themselves in by taking up a topic that has 'already been more prominently and promptly treated by other media', which makes it necessary for them to take into account these complex pre-existing 'zones of overlapping representations' as well as to find ways of becoming 'comfortable with their inevitable belatedness' as ethnographers (Marcus 2013: 151–152). These various anxieties and challenges notwithstanding, the norms of a temporality of patience are still formally in place and continue to underpin the standards of conventional professional review. However, Marcus (2013: 153–154) offers a way out, and upholds Kim Fortun's innovative and thoughtful responses, both in the practice of fieldwork and ethnographic writing, as instructive in navigating this conundrum. Following her doctoral dissertation, Fortun did not publish – until 2001 – her ethnographic monograph, *Advocacy After Bhopal*, which draws on fieldwork at the Bhopal site conducted in 1988–1989, during the period of settlement after the Bhopal disaster that occurred in 1984. She uses the 'medium-term' temporal frame (drawing on Ulf Hannerz' notion of 'medium-

term history’) to conceptually create a past-present-emergent time-space within which her account operates as an effective strategy for negotiating ‘the necessary slowness of ethnographic research with the threat of ethnography’s permanent belatedness in relation to its object’ in producing an ethnography of the contemporary.

Marcus’ hopeful entreaty to anthropologists resonates with the patient resilience of Penelope as well as with Procupez’s argument on collective patience as a long-term perspective, an active engagement with, and as a collective disposition towards, inhabiting time that combines both urgency and restraint. To go back to Procupez’s formulation, patience here is ‘waiting while working to make something happen, it is (reluctant) hope..’ (2015: S63; parentheses in the original). The ambivalences, uncertainties, doubts and intensities that are at the core of hope (Miyazaki 2010; Hage 2016), the potentialities of the unexpected and the otherwise, call for a pragmatic exercise of care and vigilance. A careful and vigilant waiting – in its modalities of hope, patience and resilience – offers ways of negotiating the challenges and pressures on the norms and forms of anthropological ethnography highlighted. Driven by passion and compassion, careful and vigilant waiting as a method may offer another way forward for anthropology.

Engaging with waiting through ethnography – on the contributions

As argued above, ethnography shares an integral relationship to waiting as a method. Owing to this engagement with waiting, anthropologists have a repository to draw upon when focusing on waiting as an ‘object’ of enquiry. In, and through, ethnography it becomes clear how waiting can be used as a prism to understand the ways in which temporalities and social relationships emerge and are being reconfigured in diverse social and cultural contexts. The ambition of this volume is therefore to open up for nuanced perspectives on how people wait differently, be that across various cultural contexts or within the same setting, and how waiting as such affords variegated potentials also for the same persons at different junctures, in various locations and situations. Thus, what the contributions offer are a set of sustained meditations on the forms and modalities of waiting.

While some of the contributions draw on the theme of religion and Christianity, others attend to contexts where neither religion nor a sense of

purpose can be said to permeate the wait. Likewise, some of the chapters present ethnographies where waiting is tied to political or financial decisions made by others, while other chapters present us with cases where the choices and decisions are pending but are to be made by the actors themselves. Thus, the array of ethnographies, rather than foreclosing a particular avenue for engaging with the concept of waiting, attests to the interplays between the politics and poetics of waiting. The central insight is that nuanced ethnographic analyses call for an engagement with a range of interplays between these dimensions, without according analytical primacy to either of them. We need to keep the figure of waiting open to acquiring variegated forms and modalities in diverse social and cultural contexts. And we need to remain open to the ways in which waiting may be performed and experienced differently. The ethnographies in this volume attest to the ways in which the poetics of waiting are intertwined with the politics of waiting, and furthermore, that in some cases this dimension may be what asks for more focused attention. Rather than positing this as a general conclusion, it serves more as a call for keeping open both ethnographies of waiting, and their inherent and uncertain interplays between multiple modalities of waiting.

In Simon Coleman's chapter, we are presented with an astute analysis of both Coleman's own experiences of growing up in Jewish London and then his fieldwork on charismatic Christians in Livets Ord, Uppsala, Sweden. The cases are used to reflect the ways ethnographer and interlocutor alike are presented with moments where ritual may not work smoothly but rather be marked by boredom, inattendance and unfocused presence. However, where inattention in Coleman's Jewish context may be what keeps the ritual working, such inattention may also be conceived as a dangerous loss of performative edge, as his Swedish ethnography attests to. What Coleman therefore presents us with is how various forms of waiting may lead to rehearsed forms of patience but also a striving to activate the potential of the now in seizing future possibilities. Curiously, such local corollaries of waiting help Coleman to engage both his ethnographic attention as well as to situate the ways boredom may not just be an inherent danger in waiting but also what opens up for different potentials and emergent forms of becoming.

Where Coleman presents a case of both Christian and Jewish forms of waiting, Jarrett Zigon in his chapter presents us with an ethnography of hope and waiting in Post-Soviet Moscow. In Zigon's chapter, we are presented with two forms of hope among his Muscovite interlocutors. The first is a passive form of hope, which locally is conceived as close to a mere waiting for things to happen. The second, by contrast, is an active form of hope where one has to work in order

to arrive at what is hoped for. In other words, one may live in a situation where the objective conditions do not leave much hope but, in order to live ethically, hope can never be surrendered. Risk and courage are inherent features of such forms of hoping, as Zigon's ethnography reveals. This chapter then contributes with a hermeneutic of hope that illuminates two dimensions of hope: active and passive. This interplay between the passive and active modalities is found in the manner in which waiting allows for hope to fashion a way of living amidst precarious conditions.

Synnøve Bendixsen and Thomas Hylland Eriksen in their contribution explore Palestinians in Oslo and their ways of acting on time and their situation of empty liminal being. The Palestinians in focus are categorized as irregular migrants, which places them beyond the pale of legal entitlements of refugees in the Norwegian system. The contribution therefore adds to the growing literature on migration and forms of waiting by not only attesting to the subjugation to time found in the situation where Palestinians await political decisions made by the welfare state, but also highlighting where they attempt to transform their wait into an active state of being, by moving outside the asylum centres to a clandestine camp in central Oslo. In this sense, Eriksen and Bendixen shed light on attempts at reordering empty and meaningless time in order to give it direction and scope. They also show that such attempts at giving shape to time, often by those without power, may be a rather frail and difficult exercise, which may lead from activity to passivity if hope is persistently thwarted.

Where many of the contributions to this volume present us with ethnographies where the waiting may be either for terrible things to come or for ways to live with or avoid boredom, James Bielo presents us with a compelling case of innovation, and the impact of withheld funding on creative processes among his interlocutors on the Ark Encounter, Kentucky. It was long planned that a creationist theme park would feature a life-sized Noah's ark, allowing visitors a vivid experience of the biblical past. However, for more than twenty months the process stalled, and the entire funding was cast in doubt, before the park finally opened in July 2016. It was in these uncertain months when the creative team was waiting for news on the funding, and hence stalling with the creative ambitions, that Bielo was allowed to do fieldwork with them. This period was hence one of delay, and one where further fundraising activities brought alternative scenarios into play, what Bielo aptly designates as a creative ceiling. The chapter reflects the interplay between Bielo's own waiting and that of the creative team, caught in the tedium and stalling of the process. What this ethnography illuminates is

that learning and innovation also come about while time is 'wasted' and doubt seems pervasive.

In Bruno Reinhardt's chapter, we are introduced to a set of engaged forms of waiting among Charismatic Christians in Ghana. Reinhardt explores the practice of prayer in his ethnography, where prayer is seen as an active state of anticipation on the part of his ardent Christian interlocutors. He situates his case as a set of entanglements between Pentecostal and post-colonial temporalities. Here the cue is taken from Marcel Mauss' work on prayer as inherently socially oriented but also from his insight that collective waiting amounts to a state of anticipation. Drawing on these in the Ghanaian context, Reinhardt argues that an active waiting for God is instrumental in fashioning endurance and steadfastness in the face of crisis, and acting upon it. Through the active engagement with prayer the Ghanaian Charismatic Christians inhabit not just a crisis-ridden landscape but also one of emergent virtual futures in which they read the signs of God's intervention and blessing. To wait for God here does not mean a passive surrender but an active giving over of one's circumstances and fostering a patient but receptive Christian form of personhood.

Whereas in many of the chapters we encounter forms of waiting that are experienced as problematic or meaningless, it is also possible to interrogate the idea of waiting as being an interim or a pause before a more meaningful situation can be resumed. It is just such a situation we encounter in Martin Demant Frederiksen's contribution on nihilists in Tbilisi, Georgia. For the nihilists, we are presented with meaninglessness, as not a temporary situation but rather a pervasive one, where there is no incentive to find a purpose of waiting. It is rather a wait without waiting that Frederiksen hones in on, and asks us to consider. We are thus pushed to go beyond waiting as a category that people necessarily work to abolish. We may find situations where some work actively towards suspending any ascription of purpose or meaning to life as such. Accordingly, a rather different sense of temporality becomes visible here, one that flies in the face of scenarios of both progress and crisis.

A different form of waiting is found in Anne Allison's chapter on those in Japan who live in isolation from society, awaiting their own departure from this life. In their ways of dealing with their impending death, they attest to some pertinent features of late modernity in that individualization may go hand in hand with attempts at controlling one's reputation and legacy. In the Japanese context, a cultural ideal of not being a burden to others is seen in the ways in which one can prepare for one's own death. Here waiting is transformed into preparation, and control over the last imprint left on one's life and destiny.

Waiting, in Allison's ethnography then, becomes a not-waiting, an active form of seizing life and controlling what is left for the future.

To return to our opening remarks, what we hope to have shown is how the very question of whether something is worth the wait is what mobilizes an open-ended scrutiny and exploration of social and cultural life. What we therefore call for is not only more ethnographic work on waiting but also fresh pathways that invite further exploration of the ways in which variegated temporal configurations elicit hope, doubt, boredom and anticipation. Ethnography here is a particular experience of being given over to waiting, but also of using such forms of waiting creatively. This is when the wait may be turned into something of worth for the human condition in all its diversity.

Notes

- 1 At the time of going to press, Shahram Khosravi's (2017) ethnography on *Precarious Lives: Waiting and Hope in Iran* was also published.
- 2 Waiting underpins Bourdieu's argument on time as a resource, in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, where he re-examines the question of reciprocity and gift-giving: he argues that holding back a gift – and thus making the recipient wait – is central to how power relations and strategies unfold between individuals as well as collectives (1977). However, temporality also plays a central role in Bourdieu's later work, particularly in *Pascalian Meditations*. In this work, he delineates the 'presence of the forth-coming' as a relationship between anticipated outcomes and the logics of the game, between expectations and chances (2000: 208ff.), and unravels what happens when the coincidence between these is not fulfilled, thereby giving 'rise to relations to time such as waiting and impatience' (2000: 209).
- 3 This section also draws on our research interests in the themes of migration, forms of social diversity and urban inequality in the Middle East, South Asia and Europe.
- 4 Several anthropological studies focus on the issue of a temporal orientation toward a permanent timeless present, e.g. Buch (2013), Day et al. (1999), Thomassen (2014) and Khosravi (2014).
- 5 As Blanchot (1981) notes, patience and impatience are constitutive of each other. Also cf. Marcel (1967: 280).
- 6 Several anthropologists have recently introduced Alain Badiou and his work on the event (Humphrey 2008; Bear 2014). Badiou also explores the figure of Paul in his work as a figure who propagates the message of universalism and bespeaks a model of the event and fidelity towards it (2003 [1997], but also see Bialecki 2009; Engelke and Robbins 2010). However, Agamben here (2005 [2000]) follows the Jewish

philosopher Jacob Taubes, and his reading of Paul as a Jewish thinker (2004 [1993]), in order to explore the figure of temporality and the ending of time, which is more pertinent to our engagement with the figure of waiting.

7 We are grateful to David Goldberg for drawing our attention to this.

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Great Expectations?: Between Boredom and Sincerity in Jewish Ritual ‘Attendance’

Simon Coleman

Introduction: a long time coming

The date is Saturday, 8 May 1976, and I am feeling uncomfortable – stifled in a new suit and tie, standing in a crowded room, at the beginning of one of the hottest English summers on record. But there are other, more urgent reasons for my unease. The room is the main hall of a Reform¹ Synagogue in North London, and the occasion is my *Bar Mitzvah* – the ceremony to mark the coming of age of Jewish boys who have reached the age of thirteen, requiring their public reading or chanting in Hebrew of an extract from the *Torah*.² By declaiming the ancient language, and despite my lack of religious conviction, I am signalling that I am competent to participate in public worship and to accept moral accountability for my actions as a Jew. Not exactly a time to relax.

While I stand on the *bimah*,³ behind me sits the normal Saturday morning congregation of the synagogue, alongside my extended family and friends, who have gathered to witness my performance. Indeed, my memory of that summer, apart from the ferocious heat that turned cricket pitches into concrete deserts plagued by ladybugs, is of spending Saturday morning after Saturday morning sweltering in the same suit while I attended the Bar Mitzvahs of my Jewish friends as, one after the other, we were transformed into ritually responsible adults in synagogues dotted around the city.

At this particular moment, I am nearing the end of my own Bar Mitzvah, and I’m staring up at the rabbi. He congratulates me for all the hard work I have put

in during the past year, and for making my family and friends proud. But then he finishes with a loaded sign-off, situated rhetorically somewhere between a warning and an exhortation: 'I hope we'll be seeing you here next week as you continue your life as a Jewish adult!' So this is what it is all about, in the end: continuity, reproduction, the *active* extension of an identity granted at birth. My immediate response is to think back over my preparatory encounters with the synagogue over the past year or more: the reciting of texts in a language whose meaning remained utterly opaque and largely undiscussed; listening to harangues about the importance of Israel in my life; avoiding the eye of the ill-tempered Hebrew teacher who at one point had been stuck in Israel and rendered unable to 'instruct' us for six weeks – an absence long enough to hint at the existence of a merciful deity; but above all, enduring tedious services, often accompanied by my equally secular and sceptical father, as we half-listened to prayer after prayer from the *siddur*⁴ while keeping an eye on the clock. To me, the sheer repetition of phrases in Hebrew conveyed the sense that services were trapping us within a recursive ritual loop, making time stand still as we waited for the chance to leave.

All of which means that, when the rabbi intones on the *bimah* that he looks forward to seeing me next week, I think to myself: 'You're not seeing me ever again in this synagogue.' So much for continuity and reproduction.

Time does move on. The date is now 10 September 2010. I am with my wife Leslie,⁵ children and in-laws in another, much larger hall, located in a Jewish community centre in downtown Toronto. Leslie – buoyed by positive childhood experiences of synagogue life in the Los Angeles Valley – is keen to join a Jewish community, given that we have just moved to Canada. I am feeling quite uncomfortable again in anticipation of this particular gathering, which is there to mark *Rosh HaShanah*, the Jewish New Year. My first surprise when we reach the hall is not just its size but also the fact that it is full – jam-packed with smartly dressed parents, children and students, and we struggle to find seats. People continue to mill in and out during most of the service, often chatting with neighbours in a way that seems more relaxed than my memories of English synagogues in the 1970s. But my second surprise is that, while I do not particularly want to be there, the experience is not quite as bad – as boring – as I had expected. I actually find myself looking around and mentally taking notes as I observe various styles of prayer and engagement; conversations happening left, right and centre; people's subtly different styles of handling the texts that they are supposed to read but most of the time just hold, occasionally turning pages to keep up with the service.

Have I started to convert? No, not at all. Even to this day, I would be perfectly happy never to attend another synagogue service, unless on ethnographic or familial duty. However, I am a different person from that 13 year old. Not only am I now a husband and father, I am also an anthropologist of religion with a professional habitus that can slip into comparative, fieldwork mode. In this regard, I am reminded of the philosopher Michael Raposa's intriguing comment that boredom is 'at bottom a semiotic problem, arising from a difficulty on the part of the bored person in reading the signs or interpreting the information in any given situation as meaningful or interesting' (1999: 2). Raposa's claim begs a few questions about agency in relation to wider circumstances – feeling economically or emotionally trapped is hardly conducive to nuanced semiotic analysis, for instance – but he makes the useful point that character and complexity of observation can mitigate the deadening effects of an otherwise alienating situation.

Still, there is more to this experience of relative ritual de-alienation than becoming an ethnographer. The semiotic direction of my 'transformation' is more precise, and has a more specific comparative element. My work as an anthropologist of religion has not been on Judaism,⁶ but on forms of Christianity, including Pentecostalism – a form of religious activity that, as a PhD student, I had assumed would take me as far as possible from the stultifying rituals of my youth. Certainly, my initial attraction to charismatic worship was an aesthetic one: I felt an affinity for its sudden shifts in scale, rhythm and spatial orientation, its active transformations of ritual tempo through music, word, movement. In the following, I want to argue that my familiarity with Pentecostalism has encouraged me to 'read' my experiences of Jewish ceremonial life in a new way, though reading is too limited a metaphor to indicate the hermeneutically inflected shifts in embodied temporality involved, and the drift in my current experience from pure boredom toward another state: not quite waiting in a conventional sense, but closer to a kind of *attendance* – involving physical presence without any specified attitudinal or behavioural commitment. Although my coming to recognition of this state came through a distinctly roundabout semiotic route, I think it is more generally present in many synagogue contexts, especially among the many contemporary Jews in diaspora who are not Orthodox – and certainly not the highly pious and visible *Hasidim*,⁷ known for their long, dark clothes and hats (for men) and wigs (for women) – but rather highly assimilated, negotiating between identities of 'cultural', 'religious' and 'ethnic' Judaism. As Andrew Buckser has recently noted (2011: 84), the anthropology of Jewry contains many excellent ethnographies of *Hasidim*, who make up under a tenth of the Jews in

the US, yet little exists on liberal Reform Jews, even though the latter account for more than one-third of the nation's Jewish population. Meanwhile, those who describe themselves as 'just Jewish' make up a quarter of the population, and yet 'are essentially invisible in the anthropological literature' (2011: 84). This chapter therefore attempts to characterize the semi-ritualized attendance of the distinctly non-pious, not only describing it ethnographically but also considering what theoretical payoff might be derived from acknowledging its existence. Such discussions not only ask about how we think ethnographically and theoretically about the so-called 'margins' of religious cores (cf. Buckser 2011: 84), but will also take us into comparative considerations of temporality, subjectivity and religious discipline.

There is of course a long history of mutual entanglement between evangelical Christianity and Judaism.⁸ The Prosperity-oriented believers whom I study in Sweden (Coleman 2000; in press) consistently incorporate both Israel and the Jews into their End-Time Expectations, creating forms of Christian Zionism whereby 'friendship' with Jewish people is also a form of appropriation – what Kristian Steinberg and Anders Lundberg (2015) see as an instrumentalization of Jewish populations, since the latter's presence in the Holy Land and rebuilding of the Temple are regarded as necessary for the Rapture. In a recent article in the *Jerusalem Post*, Daniel Estrin (2015) calls the regular evangelical pilgrimages to Israel during the Feast of Tabernacles an 'evangelical bear hug', rather felicitously encapsulating the ambiguity of an action that has the potential to combine affection with obliteration (compare also Dulin 2015).⁹

The goal- and future-oriented dimension to such apocalypticism will become relevant as I compare Jewish and evangelical attitudes toward time and ritual (cf. O'Donnell 2015), but my main focus is not on consciously orchestrated links between Christian Zionist and Jewish spaces. Rather, my concern is with how ethnographic experience of Pentecostal cultivation of sincerity, ritual engagement and subjectivity has proved key to my altered stance toward what I previously considered a pointless form of lingering within Jewish ritual contexts.¹⁰ This juxtaposition has thrown into high semiotic, hermeneutic and phenomenological relief certain dimensions of what I previously took to be merely an imposition of smothering, stultifying, ritual time – of waiting as unpleasant 'weighting'. While Elisabeth Goodstein (2005) has referred to boredom in the context of modernity as 'experience without qualities', it is precisely the unearthing of certain qualities that highlight in relating to experience I previously found merely alienating. I argue that such traits emerge from perceiving the time of 'attendance' not as modernist clock-time, nor as pre-modern event time, but as a form of *non-event*

time. I do not therefore describe a kind of ‘I was there’ form of attendance, where one marks presence at a historical event, such as a coronation. Nor, do I mean to use this phrase in a pejorative sense, as in the phrase, ‘Well, that was a non-event.’ Instead, my perception resonates with what Inger Sjørslev (2013: 95) sees as the problematic facing the fieldworker who seeks entrance into the ‘aesthetics of social rhythm’ of her informants, hoping thereby to become engaged in a ‘joint choreography of social interaction’ that can shed light on the field even when ‘nothing’ appears to be happening. As Craig Jeffrey points out (2008), waiting is both a common human activity and integral to the ethnographic enterprise.

In the context of this book, I am exploring a form of mundane attendance included within, rather than excluded from, ritual temporality, but one whose mundanity does not derive its primary identity through contrast with, and de facto definition of, sacrality. Nor is this a form of waiting pitched between doubt and hope, in other words between intensities of feeling oriented toward particular convictions or goals. Rather, it refers to a form of presence that is difficult to grasp or describe ethnographically, and one that might seem to exist at the margins of ritual action but says quite as much about the character of behaviour within a synagogue hall as any sermon or devoutly delivered prayer. In certain respects, it approximates the ‘unfocused presence’ that Sjørslev (2013) asserts is important for the ethnographer who is ‘hanging out’, although in the context of fieldwork such lack of focus itself is oriented toward an ultimate, definable ethnographic purpose, that of gaining data, whereas for the attendance that I describe its very lack of a single motive is an important part of its *raison d’être*.

In the following, I discuss interdisciplinary writings on boredom and waiting, before moving on to describe Pentecostal experiences of ritual as I have observed them in the field, exploring in particular what I see as the abhorrence of boredom that is produced in such contexts. Both of these analytical moves help me to frame my subsequent recharacterization of Jewish ritual as understood by myself and others, and in particular my interest in variations on a theme of ritualizing non-eventfulness.

On boredom and waiting

Literature on boredom takes me along some of the theoretical trajectory that I want to pursue, given that it encourages reflection on varieties of alienation from present circumstances. An important distinction is between what Samuli

Schielke (2008: 256) sees as ‘the situational boredom everyone experiences sometimes, for instance waiting for a bus’ and ‘a more existential state of lack of future and hope, intimately coupled with frustration, and often close to despair’. Schielke’s differentiation parallels Haskell Bernstein’s much earlier (1975: 513) contrast of ‘boredom as responsive feeling’ with ‘boredom as malaise’. In other words, a situational or responsive state is a product of the person’s experience of specific, time-bound circumstances, as opposed to a much more chronic and possibly psychologically and/or structurally induced condition.

Both of these modes imply the cultural variability of boredom. Indeed, as Barbara Dalle Pezze and Carlo Salzani put it, ‘boredom ... has a history’ (2009: 12), and has varied over time and space.¹¹ *Acedia* has long been recognized in Christian circles, implying ‘loss of spiritual connection to the divine’ (Goodstein 2005: 4), spiritual sluggishness, dullness in prayer, and a lacklustre attitude toward rituals of devotion (Raposa 1999: 2); however, the term is more associated with sin than is common in current parlance, and in medieval Europe seems to have been confined to monks and higher echelons in society, as opposed to the more democratic forms evident today (Dalle Pezze and Salzani 2009: 8). Similarly, *taedium vitae* – disgust with life (Toohey 2011: 15) – is associated with a cultural and social satedness only possible for aristocracy and the rich.¹²

Goodstein sees boredom haunting the contemporary West in specific ways.¹³ Its contemporary links between the static and the unproductive emerge out of ‘a modern conception of history as progress’ (2005: 5), where individual human life is also ideally placed on a trajectory of chronic movement and improvement. In this sense, boredom emerges as a side-effect of the capacity to conceptualize alternative and better prospects, so that it ‘marks the discrepancy between the actual and the imagined – the subjective cost of the limits to realizing the Enlightenment vision of infinite rational progress’ (2005: 124). Boredom is thus associated with a surfeit of unwanted, static time, given modern linkages between evoking desire and the ongoing formation of identity (2005: 35). It may appear to slow time-space, disrupting habit and contending ambiguously with forms of hope (Anderson 2004). As Henri Lefebvre famously puts it in his ‘Notes on the New Town’, part of his *Modernity*: ‘Boredom is pregnant with desires, frustrated frenzies, unrealized possibilities. A magnificent life is waiting just around the corner, and far, far away’ (1960: 124).¹⁴ A sense of thwarted subjectivity – emergent from the awareness that things could be otherwise – connects modern boredom with histories of Romantic self-realization, described by Bernstein as ‘the expression of the individual’s incapacity to fully experience his own feelings with directness and intensity’ (1975: 517). Repetition per se need not produce

boredom: it is more a matter of monotony associated with lack of agency and advancement (see also Hage 2009), and divorced from the comforts of nostalgia. Contemporary ethnography finds similar frustration in non-Western contexts as well, such as Schielke's (2008: 252) tracing of the characteristics of boredom and despair in rural Egypt, where monotony is converted into boredom precisely through the presence of powerful yet unfulfilled aspirations for a better life. Daniel Mains (2007) documents the enervating experiences of young men in urban Ethiopia who are embedded in ideologies of progress through their education, but whose unemployment produces a sense of stasis for which the only solution appears to be migration. Similarly, in Craig Jeffrey's (2010) analysis of 'timepass' among lower middle-class college students in North India, surplus time is perceived as otiose in part because of the cultivated education and crushed ambition of the people involved.

These depictions of modern boredom show how it is potentially implicated within, but not identical to, experiences of waiting. Boredom is a state, while waiting is an activity, even though the former may be caused by the latter. Waiting may conceivably be the opposite of boring (Hage 2009: 12), replete with fulfilling activities and oriented toward a firm date for moving on to the next stage of one's life trajectory, such as travel before going to university or starting a new job; it may also involve a temporary respite from the hustle of the everyday, such as resting on a station platform for a few minutes before a train arrives. However, even these kinds of waiting run the risk of shading into frustration and boredom: aimless or disappointing journeying comes to feel like procrastination, as 'wait' becomes 'waste' in terms of modern conceptions of temporal utility, or the train is delayed so that calming liminality turns into restless anxiety, out of sync with societal wider rhythms (Schweizer 2005: 781). The character of one's object can play an important role in determining the experience of waiting, as suggested by Vincent Crapanzano's (1986) contrast of 'instrumental waiting' for a specific object with 'existential waiting' for abstract aims such as world peace. Furthermore, as Crapanzano points out, the object anticipated may not be desired but dreaded; Jeffrey agrees (2008: 955) that an emotion such as panic is very different to that of heightened suspense. Both waiting and associated boredom appear, then, to present a wide palette of shades of emotion, anticipation and duration. Even though 'attendance' as I think of it displays significant differences from modern boredom, literature on the latter helps to delimit some of the ways to categorize such (in-)action. Attendance, hedged around by ritual, corresponds more with 'situational' and 'responsive' orientations than an 'existential' one. It is also a democratic rather than an elite orientation, available to all Jews who find

themselves, for whatever reason, participating in a service. Things become more complex in relation to subjectivities of self-improvement and progress: part of the distinctiveness of this ritual mode is that it generally lacks a clear object. Naturally, people go to synagogues for a variety of reasons, ranging from piety, to sociability, to doing what is necessary to ‘qualify’ for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. But there are other dimensions to their attendance, and my argument is that the heterogeneity and diffuseness of these dimensions tells us something about the kind of subjectivity available to many contemporary Jews. To explain further what I mean, I now turn to the opposite of attendance, and a state much more obviously ‘modern’ and even ‘religious’, as we more usually understand these terms: in other words, to certain Protestant forms of *engaged presence*.

Being there: Protestant presence and the banishment of boredom

Because I have spent most of my ritual life not in synagogues but in evangelical and Pentecostal meeting houses, I am used to believers reading not from synagogue-supplied *siddurs*, but from personalized Bibles whose heavy patterns of wear signify their regular use at home as well as in church. I am used to preachers not so much parroting carefully prepared notes as striding up and down the stage, pleading and/or praying for inspiration to come directly from God. And above all I am used to enthusiastic audience participation: jumping, crying, falling, even running.

There is admittedly one obvious parallel between such rituals and those I have experienced in synagogues: the considerable amount of repetition that is involved, although admittedly the *type* of repetition is different. Much Jewish ceremony consists of saying Hebrew prayers one has intoned many times before (and often memorized, although not necessarily understood). Pentecostal worship, especially in Prosperity contexts, tends to invoke repetition as a kind of accumulation of divine power, especially given its language ideology, which assumes the performative effect of words (Coleman 2000). To sing the simple verses of a song again and again (perhaps speeding up with each iteration) is not just to lull oneself into tonal and temporal communion with others. It also builds up the positively charged presence of divinely inspired words uttered by people who have become empowered speakers as a result of their born-again identity. So these words matter in particular ways. They not only signify the spiritual power as opposed to mere technical competence of the speaker but also have

effects on the self and others. They reach into the moment: to speak them both is, and creates, an event.

In such contexts, to openly speak of or express boredom is taboo: it would be the outward expression of a moral condition akin to a Pentecostal version of *acedia*, and for committed Prosperity Christians would imply a 'negative confession' with potential ill-effects in the physical world. Of course Pentecostal enthusiasm has a complex history, some of which reaches back into broadly Protestant roots. Webb Keane (2006) captures much of what is at stake in his use of the phrase 'anxious transcendence' to describe reformed Christians' concerns to surpass the bounded materiality, mediation and externality of verbal forms in order to create possibilities for unrestricted, spontaneous, sincere, relationships to language and the divine, within and beyond worship contexts. Sincerity for Keane posits speakers as self-possessed and responsible for words that also echo the inner state of the person (Keane 2002: 74). To achieve this state cannot be taken for granted, and Keane draws on Lionel Trilling's claim that sincerity in its fullest form demands 'arduous effort' (Trilling 1972: 6). Trilling provides an intellectual thread that helps Keane broaden his perspective from an examination of Dutch Calvinist missionaries toward wider considerations of what makes the modern. While for Goodstein boredom 'haunts' modernity in its emergence in cases of thwarted progress, for Keane (2006: 310) the transcendence offered by sincerity and spontaneity 'haunts' modernity in its positing of 'three unrealizable desires: for a self freed of its body, for meanings freed of semiotic mediation, and for agency freed of the press of other people'.

Prosperity contexts involve much overt semiotic mediation in the form of repeated words, to be sure, but believers nonetheless regard themselves as deploying language spontaneously, freely, even as they join in chorus after chorus of a song: thus singing may drift between conventional line and speaking in tongues, expressing spiritual inspiration and lending a spontaneous gloss to iteration. Furthermore, while such collective worship involves elements of play and humour it is also intended to be hard, focused work, the exercise of a Pentecostal Ethic that prompts each individual to cultivate an engaged self as devoted listener but also speaker of powerful religious language. Certain ritual techniques may be used to create felicitous temporal conditions for focused engagement. For instance I remember occasions when Ulf Ekman, the former head pastor of the Word of Life ministry in Sweden (Coleman 2000), would tell his congregations never to look at their watches during the service, the point being that they might be present for 30 minutes or 3 hours, depending on the workings of the Spirit. Worship as anticipation of the advent of divine presence

should not be compromised by the limitations of clock time. Ekman, in common with many Pentecostalist preachers, required the doors of the worship hall to be closed during sermons, signalling that preaching was an event bounded by intense forms of attention. Another preacher in Sweden frequently called on his congregation to reflect closely on what was happening amongst them '*just nu*' – 'right now' – entailing a sharpening of everyone's spiritual antennae in order to appreciate the significance of the ritual moment (Coleman 2011). Although he is talking about a very different form of evangelicalism, Matthew Engelke's (2007: 2) description of Friday Apostolics in Zimbabwe resonates with this discussion when he refers to the Apostolic search for an immediate relationship with God, 'live and direct' – creating a context where evoking the presence of God requires the believer's discipline to learn how to 'be' fully in the present.

Whether or not boredom emerges in Prosperity contexts, it should not come to public recognition – nor to personal consciousness – if at all possible. We see how such activity performs the hard labour of trying to exorcise Goodstein's haunted qualities of modern boredom while retaining Kean's anxiety over transcendence. Adapting to fieldwork at the Word of Life involved my striving to listen to sermons of an hour or more, often made up of themes and phrases I had heard many times before, while imagining that I was hearing them for the first time. As I have written elsewhere (Coleman 2000), on one occasion I was so fed up by one American preacher uttering what seemed to me to be hackneyed sentiments that I felt an urgent, almost physical need to walk out of the hall, only to find myself wondering subsequently whether a Word of Life supporter would have interpreted my exit as a sign that spiritually charged language was finally penetrating my spiritual consciousness. In any case, part of the seeming paradox of Pentecostal worship is that it suggests the believer *gains* self-empowerment and agency through *surrender* to God, so that any feelings of resistance to submission (such as feeling thoroughly bored) can then be interpreted as the 'fleshly' part of the person opposing, or attempting to take dominion over, the true, spiritual self.

The work being done not only involves a disciplining of the self through ritual focus and tempo(rality), however. Such revivalism is also pitched toward much broader, more ambitious aims, according to which enthusiastic ritual combines with expansive mission in creating a sense of evangelical urgency and eschatological expectancy before the prospect and progress of the imminent 'last days'. What I have called 'historiopraxy' (Coleman 2011) refers to the Word of Life sense of cultivating a proleptic sense of making a present that, from the perspective of the future, will be recognized to have been a radical

transformation: in other words, not sliding back into mere oscillations between revival and retrenchment. Such praxis involves a construction of history as a stream of novel events, freed from the burdensome weight of the past (cf. Lambek 2002).

In summary, Pentecostal engagement in worship consists ideally of: a focus on the present in order to produce the future; a disciplined creation of presence – of both the divine and of *receptivity* to the divine; a consequent abhorrence of boredom as moral state of disengagement; a striving for common action alongside an individualization of spiritual responsibility. If all of these elements valorize the ritual production of impatience, they also suggest that ritual is inherently connected with waiting as imminent expectation plus personal, if spiritually derived agency, making all who participate work toward a Pentecostal vision of progress. It is now time, then, to ask how all of these elements set up an interpretative, hermeneutic frame through which to move away from Pentecostal ‘presence’ toward Jewish ‘attendance’.

Being present, but in a different way

In a subtle set of essays, *Thinking in Jewish* (1996), Jonathan Boyarin explores processes of Jewish self-making through such elements as history, embodiment and language. In his first chapter, he deploys the metaphor of ‘Waiting for a Jew’ to refer to two aspects of Jewish life: one is the reliance of small synagogues like Boyarin’s on a core group of people who regularly make up a *minyan*, a quorum of ten religiously responsible people whose presence is necessary before public worship can begin; the other aspect is more diffuse, referring to Boyarin’s long, halting journey from growing up in a largely non-practising family toward becoming a practitioner and scholar of Judaism.

It is clear that Boyarin belongs to a recognizably American cohort of strivers and workers, and in this sense his experience ‘of time and selfhood’ parallels that of many aspirant and already middle-class Protestants. On the other hand the forms of ritual waiting and worship he describes seem a world away from the restless, linear orientation of evangelical Christianity: Boyarin’s gradual accumulation of his Jewish identity lacks a dramatic conversion narrative, and is more about emergent participation than excited anticipation as he comes to terms with a specific community – Eighth Street Shul – in a particular place – New York.

Boyarin’s second chapter, ‘Self-Exposure as Theory: The Double Mark of the Jew,’ continues to examine the chronic formation of religious subjectivity – or

‘the relation between formations of chronology and those of selfhood’ (1996: 38). Admitting that this chapter has an androcentric bias, Boyarin analyses circumcision and the habitual wearing of a *yarmulke* (skull-cap). Both are indices of male Jewish belonging (and in Butlerian terms [1990], *male-making*), even though one involves a form of physical removal (visible only in private) and the other a form of material addition and adornment (publicly displayed). Although Boyarin complicates his oppositions, he notes: ‘The central metaphor for our analysis is the “double sign” of Jewish male ethnic identity: one inscribed on our genitals before we were ever able to exercise will, the other placed on our heads in a free-willed if ambivalent act of self-identification with ethnicity that we carry with us into such social spaces as anthropology conventions’ (1996: 34).

Experience of these ‘marks’ says much about temporality, self-cultivation and subjectivity, and ultimately the character of ritual attendance. Boyarin (1996: 49) describes circumcision as not remembered by the individual and yet invoking a sense of inheritance, a wider history and genealogy, so that ‘the incorporation, both literal and figurative, of Jewishness as an aspect of the self implies an experience of time that is panchronic and empathetically expanded’ (1996: 39). Indeed, Jewish senses of past temporality tend to become richly entangled with the development of personhood, and not just that of males. Melanie Fogell’s discussion of ‘new Jewish identities,’ tellingly titled *Ambiguous Selves*, notes that ‘The expression “never forget” is a familiar admonition for Jews’ (2006: 171). The apparent impossibility of certain forms of amnesia emerges from what she sees as Judaism’s chronic retelling of history, as famously enacted in the Passover service, when recounting the story of the Exodus of Egypt becomes rooted in domestic sociability combined with instruction of the young. It is important to remember that Passover, like the Bar or Bat Mitzvah service, is celebrated by many Jews who regard themselves, without any embarrassment, as being agnostic or atheist. Furthermore, the narratives being recalled, such as that of the Exodus, are often about *patience* rather than *impatience* in relation to time, involving the need to acknowledge the continued salience and presence of the (often traumatic) past rather than proclaiming any urgent ‘historio-praxic’ obligation to (re-)form the future. There is a telling detail in the Passover service that illustrates this point bodily, called the ‘leaning’. The idea is that the leader of the service and perhaps some others should explicitly recline to one side, suggestive of a person of leisure who is now free, as opposed to enduring the slavery that was the fate of Jews in ancient Egypt. This ritual performance of a conspicuous *lack* of effort embodies both an acknowledgement and a ritual harnessing of history, enacted through an idiom of ease and lack of tension.¹⁵ The Holocaust,

in turn, has become a paradigmatic emblem of more recent historical trauma, and it is telling that many synagogues ask young people undergoing Bar and Bat Mitzvahs not only to celebrate their own coming to adulthood, but also to select, acknowledge and publicly narrate the story of a young person who was killed during the Holocaust and thus prevented from reaching full Jewish personhood. Various forms of temporality – as patience, world history, ancestorhood and genealogy – are thus brought together as part of this self- and other-oriented cultivation of subjectivity.¹⁶

Notice the complex intersections and tensions in these examples between identity as taken-for-granted inheritance and as active cultivation, between obligation and autonomy (Horowitz 2011: 88) in the making of Jewish subjectivity – even or *especially* among the non-religious. Bethanie Horowitz (Horowitz 2011: 82) notes that a key question for twenty-first-century Jews is where their Jewishness figures in relation to other aspects of the self, and her point leads us back to Jonathan Boyarin's consideration of the modalities of becoming Jewish whilst also engaging in the professional striving and linear orientation that resonate with a Protestant Ethic. For Boyarin, ritual engagement with the past and with genealogy is significant in forming the inevitable double consciousness of middle-class Jews. The incorporation of such Jewish temporalities and relationalities contrasts with the figure of the self-made person – almost by definition a person *without* history, and one for whom 'the word "success" has lost its connotation of coming after, inheriting, taking the place of' (1996: 38). Boyarin suggests that this American ideal is indeed closely linked to a Christian and particularly a Protestant notion of individual salvation – one involving a 'chronology ... coterminous and contingent with a sequential and progressive individual biography' (1996: 38). His contrast is starkly drawn, but note how his figure of the self-made person, erasing ties with the past in order to achieve freedom and progress, resonates not only with Keane's and Goodstein's discussions of how modernity attempts to exorcize its ghosts, but also with my description of Pentecostals as ritual cultivators of a future unfettered by the past.

Wearing a yarmulke outside of a synagogue context – the second of Boyarin's marks of the male Jewish person – is not only voluntary (local social pressures aside), but also a much rarer experience among Jewish males than circumcision, and Boyarin notes that the 'gap between the two marks of identity ... becomes in some ways more acute in a period when a large plurality of Jewish males are circumcised and yet do not practice Judaism or identify as religious Jews' (1996: 54). We see dramatized here two different kinds of ethical self-making, with different

temporal implications: the choice, renewed each day, of wearing the yarmulke, versus the physical fact of *having been* incised. Adopting the yarmulke is an act of chronic, everyday self-disciplining, especially given the attention and even opprobrium it can attract from others, as well as the fact that its wearer is expected to abide by other standards of behaviour associated with *halakha* (Jewish law) such as making loaded decisions as to whether a given restaurant or friend's home is sufficiently kosher to fit personal standards. To some degree, the experience of wearing the yarmulke comes close to the more tension-filled, everyday, reformist pieties of Protestants or indeed devout Muslims, but in the context of this chapter it is the temporalities associated with circumcision that are more intriguing. Circumcision is the more irreversible but also the more widely diffused act, expressive of a sense of Jewish identity as *always already* part of the person, before any personal choice could be exercised; it is emblematic of the idea that the Jewish body (whether male or female) is inherently set apart in a way that is irreversible, no matter how lax the daily behaviour of the person. Indeed, it is worth noting that the ceremonial marking of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah is not strictly necessary for the Jewish person to be qualified to assume their adult ritual and moral responsibilities. It does not *make* the person qualified in performative terms: it acknowledges that they *are* so.

We have now come a long way from Protestant productions of ritual impatience, or missionary orientations to remaking the world. On balance, recognition of the continued salience of the past takes liturgical precedence over remaking the future. The ritual deployment of language remains important and multifaceted, but repetition of ancient Hebrew words is more of an index of competence than an accumulation of divine power, as well as a bringing to life of holy script through public reading (e.g. Engelke 2007: 19). The relationship of those words to personal subjectivity is also rather different to the Pentecostal example: while the intoning of Hebrew prayer in public involves bodily disciplining, it is not inherently linked to valorizations of spontaneity. So we are ready to come back to Jewish ritual, to look more closely at its temporalities, to see how it constructs forms of 'attendance' among its participants, whether or not they are feeling bored.

Andrew Buckser's book *After the Rescue* (2003) examines Jewish identity and community in contemporary Denmark by focusing on a congregation based in Copenhagen. The very title of the book brings temporality into the analysis, as the community he describes is one thriving *after* the traumas of the Second World War. At the same time, it is a community that has taken advantage of a relative lack of anti-Semitism to flourish and fragment, and indeed to assimilate

into wider Danish society, so that Jewish identity is negotiated alongside a strong sense of secular (albeit Christian-inflected) citizenship. Buckser thus describes a diasporic community that is relatively similar to the one in Toronto that I referred to earlier, with constant questions raised over how reproduction of Judaism can occur. An interesting strategy of the Danish population is to seek ritual safety in numbers, in the sense that it sees itself as a 'unity' congregation, bringing together Jews of very different persuasions and levels of commitment, and thus combines Orthodox ritual forms with, for instance, the recognition of mixed-marriages (2003: 64–65).

Buckser's chapter on ritual is most relevant. In certain respects, he describes an experience familiar from contemporary churches, involving services that are carefully choreographed, with most of the action focused on the *bimah*, so that 'the process of the ritual thus involves an unfolding social and political drama, as the rabbi calls different members of the congregation to take part in different tasks' (2003: 70). His experience takes a different turn, however, when during a service he happens to ask his neighbour what is meant by a Hebrew inscription on a wall, and discovers that neither his immediate interlocutor, nor those around him, have any idea how to translate the words. Indeed, he finds that most Jews in the congregation speak little or no Hebrew, so that the content of the service is opaque to them unless they follow the translation in their *siddurs*. There is, however, a significant ambiguity here contained in the word 'speak': many members can indeed utter Hebrew in the sense that they can intone prayers and some texts, but that does not imply that they have any idea how to translate the words. Buckser describes an occasion during *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement service, when during a particularly well-known prayer, the *Avinu Malkeinu*,¹⁷ the effect becomes electric as thousands of voices come together: 'I saw a number of men I had interviewed in secular settings, men who had declared a complete disinterest in religion and admitted plainly that they knew little or nothing of Jewish liturgy, now decked out proudly in ritual garments and singing along loudly with the congregation' (2003: 84). It is familiarity with the prayer that enables such temporary collective participation and repetition. This event has distant echoes, in oral form, of the evangelical Bible, well worn through use; and yet, in terms of Protestant frames of 'sincerity' we might ask how words can faithfully echo 'interiority' if the speaker has no idea what they are saying. In fact, this is clearly the wrong lens through which to assess what is going on. Such singing is a point of brief ritual articulation among those present, not an expression of semantic communion. While it demonstrates the possibility of mutually coordinated choreography, there is no obligation for

such coordination to be consistently maintained throughout a service. People come and go at will, and much debate occurs among family and friends as to when to leave. Buckser recounts an occasion when he is invited to dinner with a family who decide to go home early on *Yom Kippur*, thus missing the blowing of the *shofar*¹⁸ that he had assumed would be the climax of the entire service (2003: 85).

When Buckser asks informants about this apparently haphazard dimension of services, he notes that they tend to laugh in recognition, but do not express disapproval. What is in ritual play is not a disciplining of congregants into shared displays of belief but rather making accessible 'a common language through which Jews can speak to themselves and each other about what it means to be Jewish' (2003: 66). Arguably, such a language is effective precisely because it lacks semantic content, 'meaning' in a strict Protestant sense (Engelke and Tomlinson 2007), leaving space for extensive sociality.¹⁹ Nonetheless (Engelke and Tomlinson 2007: 88), one ritual does seem to have relatively uniform support: that of circumcision. Life-cycles generally involve the most intense forms of conflict among different factions of the community, but circumcision brings ambiguities of identity most sharply into relief. Fuzziness of engagement is counteracted by the need to make a stark decision: to circumcise or not to circumcise?²⁰ As in Boyarin's analysis, such a ritual act – essentially irreversible – is also the one most likely to be adopted by even the most liberal and non-believing Jews. Circumcision thus becomes about inscribing a form of temporality on to the body: the *always already*. It may even be seen as an extreme example of Douglas's (1970) grid-group diagnosis of social formation and ideology: strong group (collective boundary) is accompanied by weak grid (internal regulation). Once membership to the collective is publicly acknowledged, further action becomes optional.

Buckser convincingly depicts congregants milling around a 'common reservoir of symbols' (1970: 66). I suggest that in addition he is describing a fine example of what I call 'attendance'. Attendance should not be confused with *attention*, since the focus of activities during services can be varied to say the least.²¹ Nor is the congregant expected always to coordinate their actions with all others in the room. I suggest, in fact, that it is the very production of ritual inattention that is most notable here. By deploying this term, I mean something different to Goffman's (1972) 'civil inattention', which he saw as the means through which strangers in close proximity achieve neutral forms of interaction. While I invoke Goffman's sense of a public gathered largely harmoniously in a dense space, my point is that the general lack of a strong obligation to focus

on centralized worship allows the possibility for numerous other, smaller scale, forms and frames of sociality to develop, or simply for a congregant to be physically present but mentally preoccupied with something else entirely.

Thus the ritual 'problem of presence' for these participants revolves not around the troubling debates over incarnation and materiality that vexed Engelke's Friday Apostolics, but in relation to a different kind of immanence: the achievement of *human* gathering oriented around an identity that is already 'given' and yet being rearticulated in public. As the title of Buckser's book – *After the Rescue* – also implies, this is an immanent presence haunted by a powerful form of human absence, that of Jews who have suffered threats or extinction in historical events that iconically include but extend far beyond the Holocaust.²² The particular quality of attendance created in such worship is brought into semiotic relief by contrasting it with the chronic, anxious work on the self and wider world evident in certain Protestant ritual forms. I am not suggesting that congregants consciously define themselves in opposition to Christian ritual, although a few may. Rather, I am portraying the enactment of an identity that is – in part, and perhaps paradoxically – asserting its very *lack* of a need constantly to disciplined and re-created by ritual forms. Belonging has already been achieved; ritual becomes less about pitching oneself toward an eschatological future and more an expression of the fact that the workings of history have not eradicated one's presence. Indeed, it is one's continued existence *as a Jew*, no matter how non-practising, that seems significant for many modern, liberal congregants in Europe and North America.

If I were given the opportunity to re-encounter my 13-year-old self, I might point out that boredom can sometimes be a luxury, signalling an ability to remove oneself performatively from having to engage with tension-filled action. Under certain circumstances there is much to be said for keeping ritual expectations low, in contrast to the kind of orientation that assumes that spiritual progress toward a desired end is not only a necessity, but also a responsibility – a 'weight' as well as a wait in relation to the *future*. The temporalities and agencies of Jewish ritual often establish a very different attitude toward history. Hence the doubling up of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates, living and dead, in order to exorcise the horrors and extinctions of the recent past; hence the ostentatious leaning during Passover, cocking a ceremonial snook toward an enforced history of slavery and displacement; hence the easy moving in and out of the temporalities of potentially exact(ing) ritual worship. After all, Jewish time can never truly be tamed: it always has the capacity to harm. And so 'attendance' has qualities of restoration but also of insouciance. Certainly, having the hard shell

of ritual practice performed in one's presence provides a means of *associating* oneself with a common liturgical language; but it does not involve a procrustean *alignment* with such practice, in ideological, temporal or performative terms.

Comparisons and conclusions

In his analysis of features of mutual articulation among ritual symbols, song and dance among the Merina of Madagascar, Maurice Bloch famously comments that 'you cannot argue with a song' (1974: 70) on the grounds that ritual does not rely on forms of communication that have explanatory, propositional force. Rather, the effectiveness of authoritative ritual lies in its semantic rigidity and extension beyond ordinary logic. The types of semantic articulation characteristic of formalized speech and ritual are 'arthritic' (1974: 64), contrasting with more flexible and pointed conversations that constitute the language of mundane discourse. However, my description of Jewish rites presents occasions where arthritic and non-arthritic forms of communication are closely juxtaposed: if they are not mutually articulated per se, they coexist as symbiotic semiotic practices. Focus on, and participation in, formal ritual comes and goes, as a given participant may move swiftly between joining in a Hebrew song and then turning round to instigate a lively dialogue with friends or family.

Part of the force of Bloch's argument centres on the idea that ritual formalization creates authority by removing what is said from any particular time. In the cases I describe, the temporal orientations of formal ritual and informal conversation are different but largely complementary. 'Attendance' involves being in proximity to 'arthritic' ritual forms, often uttered in an archaic language that recalls the deep history of Judaism; but it does not imply the necessity of being constantly bound by the collective rhythms of such ritual. It may be hard to argue with a song; but one can ignore it. Here, the role of the rabbi is significant as a distinctly limited orchestrator of what goes on: while some Jewish traditions acknowledge the existence of inspired religious figures, most rabbis act as teachers rather than spiritual gurus. They lack the ontologically set-apart status of a Merina elder or a powerful Pentecostal preacher.

Boyarin and Boyarin refer to the anxieties among Jewish Studies faculty members over having their work cast in a comparative framework (1997: ix). It is as if the rhetorical exclusivity of the faith discourages scholarly juxtaposition. Nonetheless, I have suggested the value of interpreting experiences of Jewish ritual through an ethnographic habitus more accustomed to working with

Pentecostalism. Admittedly, for the most part this exercise has revealed contrasts in ideological approach and ritual stance. However, it also possible to discern limited parallels with other forms of Christian ritual, and I shall mention just two. In her discussion of the fate of the ‘middle ground’ of religious life in Europe – the large number of people, perhaps 50 per cent, who are neither actively involved in religion nor consciously opposed to it – the British sociologist Grace Davie refers to the significance of ‘vicarious religion’: in other words, religious activity performed by an active and knowledgeable minority on behalf of a less committed majority (e.g. Davie 2010). Davie’s aim is to probe the often implicit but still important connections between lukewarm parishioners and historic churches. Support for such churches comes in the form of general goodwill and even financial support but not regular attendance. Her concept captures something of the attitude I have traced among diasporic, liberal, Jewish populations – the sense that people are content for regular ritual events to take place, even if they do not regard their own presence as strictly necessary on more than an occasional basis. I am not sure, however, that Davie’s vicariousness quite captures the Jewish identification with a faith so intimately tied up with twin questions of both reproduction and repeated historical threat. While much religious responsibility in Jewish Toronto and Copenhagen lies with learned ritual specialists, individuals remain responsible for creating families where a Jewish genealogy can continue to exist (and here, a relative future-orientation does make its entrance). Potential tensions between obligation and autonomy, identity commitment and ritual insouciance, are well expressed in the ambiguities of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah: the public marking of the coming to Jewish adulthood of a young person who may, like his or her parents, be atheist. The ambivalences toward such occasions were nicely captured in the remark I heard many years ago, made at the post-Bar Mitzvah celebration of a friend of mine by his grandmother: ‘The party is lovely. Why did we need to have the *shul*²³ bit?’

Comparisons with non-Protestant forms of Christianity are also instructive. Andreas Bandak and Tom Boylston’s (2014) analysis of ritual correctness and orthodoxy among Christian Orthodox populations includes an emphasis on modes of relating to authority that create room for pluralism and heterodoxy within an overarching structure of faith. The ‘orthodoxy of Orthodoxy’ thus contrasts with the scriptural, language-oriented orientations toward truth and authority often seen in ethnographies of Christian evangelicalism, and depicts an inclusive and encompassing hierarchy that more easily acknowledges the interrelation between divine perfection and fallible humanity. Under such ritual

circumstances, the chronic cultivation of a pious self seems less significant than the assumption that somebody, somewhere, knows what should be done. I would not describe such attitudes as ‘insouciant’, and of course they maintain very different attitudes toward both incarnation and temporality to those evident in synagogue life, but they parallel the Jewish attitudes I have described in their open-endedness toward the necessity for individuals relentlessly to seek religious truth.

I do not claim that what I call ‘attendance’ is the only mode or register evident within Jewish ritual. However, I suggest that, in common with many manifestations of ‘waiting’, it is easy to overlook as it occupies the interstices between more marked or definitively formed activities. The path I have traced in my argument is away from more easily recognizable forms of ritual alienation and boredom toward a less tangible but perhaps more intriguing state of semi-detached and yet deeply social presence. Attendance does not rely on sentiments of thwarted subjectivity, but rather on the cultivation of relative ritual ease, even if at times deeply serious histories are invoked. Such a ritual ‘stance’, if it can be said to take a single form, draws on the idea of reaching back into a religious past that continues to inform the present. At the same time, it suggests that congregants do not need to wait or work to achieve acceptance: they have always belonged.

Notes

- 1 Buckser (2003: 63–64) notes that from the nineteenth century, three main institutional responses emerged among Western synagogues to the issue of adapting Jewish law to modern life. Orthodox Judaism called for fidelity to the law; Reform Judaism focused on adaptation to wider culture; Conservative Judaism struck a balance between the two.
- 2 Torah refers to the Jewish holy scriptures. Bar Mitzvah means ‘son of the commandment’ and the Bat Mitzvah, carried out in some synagogues, means ‘daughter of the commandment’.
- 3 Raised platform.
- 4 Prayer book.
- 5 Leslie Carlin, also an anthropologist.
- 6 See Orlove (1997) for reflections on Judaism and carrying out ethnography.
- 7 Hasidic Judaism emerged as a revival movement in Eastern Europe from the eighteenth century and has since spread throughout Europe, North America and Israel.

- 8 Shaul Magid (2015: 4) argues that much of modern Judaism in the West developed under a Christian gaze, and thus sought to distinguish itself from Christian thought, for instance by regarding the incarnation as antithetical to Judaism. Intriguingly, he sees Hasidism as a form of Orthodox Judaism that emerged without such strictures, and thus able to produce a theology more influenced by incarnational thinking.
- 9 See also, for example, Feldman (2007) on relations between evangelical Christians and Jewish tour guides in Israel.
- 10 I have discussed the ‘multi-sited ethnographer’ in Coleman 2006, referring to the analytical stance that emerges as we compare different ethnographic sites throughout our careers.
- 11 Yasmine Musharbash (2007) links variations of boredom with distinct, local forms of modernity. For her Australian Aboriginal informants, it implies lack of *social* connectedness – but is never linked to ritual occasions.
- 12 See also Goodstein (2005: 69) on Durkheim’s linking of anomie to modernity.
- 13 Goodstein (2005: 3) quotes the Oxford English Dictionary as suggesting that boredom was non-existent until the late eighteenth century. The French *Ennui* and German *Langeweile* are older.
- 14 Compare Walter Benjamin’s (e.g. 1999) observations (influenced by Simmel) on the character of modern boredom, divorced from the rhythms of more traditional forms of life and prompting the development of forms of phantasmagoria.
- 15 There is a well-known element of the Passover service that suggests a more proleptic attitude toward history in an attempt to heal spatial displacement: the ritualized cry of ‘next year in Jerusalem’. And yet in the context of a widespread diasporic Jewish community that could now return to Israel, but chooses not to, this sentiment has become a matter of tradition more than aspiration for many Jews.
- 16 Note also how Jewish participants in services are called up to the *bimah* using their Hebrew name, and mention of the name of their father or mother – language and genealogy combine in locating the person.
- 17 ‘Our Father, Our King’.
- 18 Ram’s horn.
- 19 Thus Buckser states (2003: 101): ‘Danish Jews do not share their faith the way Lutherans share theirs, taking a common position on key issues of theology; they share their faith the way a family shares its past, some embracing it, some rejecting it, each in a different way, yet none capable of understanding him- or herself except in its light.’
- 20 The importance of circumcision is intriguing in the context of a religion where continuity of faith is passed on through the female line. For wider discussions of the Jewish body, see Diemling and Veltri (2009) and Konner (2009).
- 21 Indeed, Harold Schweizer (2005: 788) notes that for Bachelard it is the novel and the sudden that engender attention.

- 22 The frequently asserted *exceptionality* of such extinction has become a point of deep political unease and internal conflict among more liberal Jewish populations, given the actions of the contemporary Israeli state.
- 23 *Shul* is a Yiddish word, used to describe a synagogue.

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Hope and Waiting in Post-Soviet Moscow

Jarrett Zigon

It is hope that maintains most of mankind.

— Sophocles

To what extent can we think the phenomena of waiting and hope together? At first glance, these seem to be two very different temporal modalities of being-in-the-world. A prereflective everyday understanding of waiting, we might say, seems to be a passive resignation to that which comes to us (for recent anthropological claims about the activeness of waiting, see Hage 2009; Han 2012). Even when our waiting has a directedness, for example when we wait in line at the airport, our ability to act seems limited by the conditions of waiting. The line will only move at its own pace, all we can do is wait until our turn arrives. Hope, on the other hand, seems to entail a more active modality of being. Hope does not guarantee anything but it does suggest that something can still be done. But yet hope too seems to have a passive aspect. For no matter how we act, no matter how hard we might try, the fact that no hoped-for end can be guaranteed remains, perhaps, the most essential characteristic of the phenomenon of hope. In this chapter, I explore the phenomenology of these two temporal aspects of hope. In doing so, my intention is not only to cast light on the experience of hope in everyday life, but to consider how that aspect of hope – the passive aspect – most closely associated with waiting may be best considered as the temporal structure of being-in-the-world.

I pursue this task through a hermeneutic analysis of life-historical narratives I collected over the course of thirteen months of research in Moscow in the early and mid-2000s on the moral experience of some practising artists and actively practising Russian Orthodox Christians living in the city.¹ In taking a critical hermeneutic approach (Zigon 2014a; Zigon forthcoming) to my analysis, I intend to disclose the temporal structures and orientations of my interlocutors'

ways of being-in-the-world. As will become clear, this analysis discloses that being-in-the-world is perhaps best understood in terms of a continuous temporal shift and slippage that I interpret as revealing the two essential aspects of hope. As a result, I will argue that hope is not so easily conceived as either passive or active, or as the hope for a better future, as the tendency has been in recent anthropological engagements with the concept (Crapanzano 2003, 2004; Hage 2003; Miyazaki 2003, 2004, 2006; Allison 2013), and as such, hope may, in part, have more in common with a prereflective understanding of waiting than might appear at first glance.

In particular, I will show that my Muscovite interlocutors articulate hope in two ways (Zigon 2009a), and that these, in fact, match well with the two ways in which they articulated their moral experience. Thus, on the one hand, many of my interlocutors articulated hope as the temporal structure that sustains an already accomplished life, and, on the other, as the temporal orientation of intentional ethical action in certain moments of what I have elsewhere called a moral breakdown (e.g. Zigon 2007, 2013), or the conscious reflection and questioning of one's way of being-in-the-world. These two aspects of hope, then, can be seen as the temporal aspects of the anthropological theory of morality that I have developed from this research (see, for example, Zigon 2009b, 2010, 2011, 2012). This theory of morality makes an important distinction between morality as one's unreflective and non-conscious everyday way of being-in-the-world, and the reflective and conscious ethical action necessary in moments of what I call moral breakdown or ethical dilemma. Therefore, what I intend to show in this chapter is that like this anthropological theory of morality that views being-in-the-world as partially characterized by the constant shifting between morality and ethics, hope is also best understood as a constant slippage between the two aspects of the temporal structure of everyday life and the temporal orientation of intentional ethical action.

Recasting hope: from the active/passive dichotomy to hope's temporal aspects

Having grown up in a small, predominately Catholic rural town, I found nothing strange about sharing a few beers with Grigorii, a twenty-six-year-old Russian Orthodox Seminary student living in Moscow. Indeed, somehow I always thought it was the norm that priests, at least on occasion, have a drink or two. Eventually I felt comfortable enough to tell Grigorii this. He laughed a bit and

told me about the 'spirit' of alcohol, but then turned to telling me, with a more serious tone, about his pre-seminarian life. Grigorii would not describe himself as having been an alcoholic, but certainly he drank too much. It was not only drinking that had been a problem for Grigorii but, in general, how he lived his life. As he put it, too much chaos and not enough focus. One day Grigorii woke up and realized that he did not know what his life was all about, what he was living for, and where he was heading. It was this realization that he was living his life without stability, without a goal, without meaning that gave Grigorii hope. For, as Grigorii told me, from the upheavals of his life grew the hope to change. With this hope Grigorii found motivation to alter his path in life, to give up the drinking (for the most part) and partying, and turn to the life of God.

I had been interested in the notion of hope for some time so when Grigorii brought it up I could not resist. What is this hope that motivated? And how could what Vincent Crapanzano (2004) calls an attitude that is so often considered passive provide Grigorii with the motivation to begin to alter his life? When I asked him about this, he told me:

There are two kinds of hope (*nadezhda*). The first kind is when a person is lying underneath the tree with his mouth open and waiting for the apple to fall into his mouth. The second kind of hope is when a man starts to work hard and he hopes and is patient that his task will sooner or later give him some result, some benefit. And when I speak about hope I mean the second kind.

In other words, although Grigorii recognizes both the passive and active aspects of hope, it was the latter aspect that provided the capacity to change his life. When he realized that his life had become something he did not want, that is, when he found himself in the midst of a breakdown, Grigorii could not wait for his life to change, but rather he had to begin the ethical work to bring about this change, and it was active hope that provided what we might call the motivating ethical force to do this.

Grigorii was not the only one with whom I spoke in Moscow to make a distinction between the active and passive aspects of hope. A young Orthodox priest, who in addition to the work at his parish also edits a journal on the Orthodox faith and life for young persons, characterized hope similarly.

There are some situations when there is nothing to do but to hope. And there are some situations when we can act and hope together. Our belief is tightly connected with hope, of course. Now when we are preparing for the fast, there is confession in the church. Sometimes it is said that we are so sinful that all we can do is hope. But when we sin we understand that we need to do things,

through our actions and prayers, as we hope. We know that God is very kind and forgiving but we need to take pains to help Him forgive us for our sins. Of course we hope, but we try to do something to be more perfect, to help Him. Of course God is very kind to us, but we cannot wait for Him passively to forgive us. We should hope and do something to become better.

Like Grigorii, the Holy Father acknowledges that there is a passive aspect of hope, which as articulated seems to be more like waiting. But according to the Holy Father, this passivity comes about not because the hope itself is passive, but because the situation, the condition in which hope arises, precludes the ability to act (on the concept of situation, see Zigon 2015). This is the condition when one is so sinful that there is nothing left to do but hope. Perhaps this would be better expressed as a hopeful waiting (see Reinhardt in this collection). Fortunately, this is not the regular state of affairs. For in most cases it is expected that one combine their hope with certain activities, such as prayer, to be forgiven of their sins. In other words, it seems that the passivity that the Holy Father describes comes about not because it is a necessary characteristic of hope, but because of the conditions in which hope sometimes arises.

Although I know of no sustained Russian Orthodox writings or discursive tradition on hope, it is not uncommon for Orthodoxy to be described as a religion of hope. Thus, for example, in writing of Orthodoxy in general, Peter Berger (2005: 446) has pointed out that the Orthodox focus on Easter and resurrection rather than Western Christianities' focus on Good Friday gives the former a more hopeful and liberating theological focal point than the 'gloomy' and 'penitential piety' of the West. Similarly, Vasily Zenkovsky (1963: 49) describes the Russian Orthodox 'conscience' as motivated by a 'hope for the possibility of ... moral resurrection and renovation', which in turn leads to a 'spiritual transfiguration of man'. This focus on moral resurrection is closely linked to the Orthodox view of personhood that sees each person as constituted with both the image and likeness of God. While the image of God is given by grace, the likeness of God is merely a potentiality, the realization of which one must ethically work to attain. As such, Orthodox moral theology has it that the purpose of each human life is to ethically work on oneself in order to attain the likeness of God. This dynamic view of personhood, then, can be interpreted as containing within it the two aspects of hope that I will further delineate below.

This dichotomous characterization of hope by Grigorii and the Holy Father as active and passive is common among theological discourses of hope and most probably has its roots in the writings of Paul. For on the one hand, as one of the fundamental virtues of a Christian life, hope is a disposition that must

be actively acquired, maintained and perfected. Hope must be embodied or, perhaps better put, ensouled. While on the other hand, Paul writes of hope as a passive patience or endurance. As he writes in his letter to the Romans about the hope for immortality: 'if we hope for something we do not yet see, then we look forward to it eagerly and with patience' (Romans 8.25).

Although the active/passive dichotomy of hope has its roots in early Christian writings and theology, it remains today in contemporary, secularized characterizations of hope. Thus, for example, Vincent Crapanzano (2004: chap. 4) has maintained this dichotomy by characterizing hope as passive, as 'a sort of positive resignation', or a 'waiting-induced paralysis'. At best, this 'resigned hope' can be transformed 'into active desire' through the presence of a concrete hoped-for object. According to Crapanzano (2004: 222–223), however, this transformation only serves to conceal 'the resignation that lies, inevitably, behind' what he calls abstract hope. Thus, even the transformation of 'resigned hope' into 'active desire' seemingly serves primarily to cover over the passive character of hope. Hope for Crapanzano, then, is essentially 'desire's passive counterpart' (Crapanzano 2004: 100). Hope, in this formulation, does not seem to differ all that much from what we might otherwise call hopeful waiting.

Crapanzano does not, so it seems, characterize hope as essentially passive in order, as does Paul, to reveal its nature as patience or perseverance. Rather, Crapanzano is attempting to express the necessary contingency of hope. Hope is passive not because there is nothing one can do to bring about or realize one's hopes. Rather, hope is passive because ultimately no matter what one does to realize their hope, hope's realization depends on an other, whether that other be a god, fate, chance or some other human individual (Crapanzano 2004: 100). While many of the Muscovites with whom I spoke would agree with Crapanzano on this, they would not, however, characterize such contingency as passive. As Grigorii and the Holy Father have already suggested, although they know that the realization of the hopes about which they spoke to me are ultimately contingent on an other – in this case, God and the Church/Seminary – they nevertheless act – for example, pray, confess, attend classes, study hard, actively avoid alcohol – so as to create the best possible situation for the contingent realization of these hopes.

Crapanzano further attempts to link the passive and the contingent character of hope through the coupling of hope and hopelessness. As he puts it, hope 'can never be fully divorced from hopelessness any more than hopelessness can be divorced from hope' (Crapanzano 2004: 114). I agree with Crapanzano that to some extent the conditions out of which hope arises create the possibility for

hope in such a way that there is a precarious line between hope and hopelessness, in which there is always the danger of slippage. In this sense, we can talk about the necessary coupling of hope and hopelessness, a coupling that constitutes each. But this constituting coupling does not necessitate the passive and resigned nature of hope Crapanzano emphasizes. For as I will show throughout this chapter, hope and its interplay with hopelessness is often described as the vital force behind one's ability to act and be-in-the-world. Therefore, I disagree with Crapanzano when he places hope outside of the active, or Minkowski (1970: 92) when he situates hope, like desire, 'above activity'. Rather, I contend that for my Muscovite interlocutors, hope in its various aspects is necessary for the very possibility of being-in-the-world and acting in that world.

In his various writings on the production of hope among some Japanese traders in the financial markets, Hirokazu Miyazaki seems to associate hope with novelty and the new. In describing the reorientation these Japanese traders create in their lives, and in so doing creating new dreams and ideals for themselves, Miyazaki (2003, 2006) contends he is showing us the production of hope that helps maintain these individuals' lives. This is particularly seen, so Miyazaki tells us, in the dreams or career aspirations of one of his informants in the Japanese financial sector. I certainly agree that dreams (including daydreams), ideals, goals and utopian visions can, at times, help produce hope (Grigorii's story of his turn toward the priesthood is just one example of that kind of hope). I hesitate, however, to limit hope to an attitude that is always, or for the most part, hope for the new or something better or ideal. For my research suggests that hope (as articulated by my Muscovite interlocutors) is not primarily aimed at a better life or attaining the good. Nor did anyone articulate utopian, activist or progressive aspirations. Rather, much of the hope articulated to me was similar to how some have recently described agency as an aim toward continuity, stability or living sanely (Asad 2003; Mahmood 2005; Yurchak 2006; Zigon 2011). Therefore, although I am sympathetic to recent attempts by social scientists and philosophers to reappropriate the concept of hope for progressive politics (e.g. Harvey 2000; Zournazi 2002; Hage 2003; Allison 2013), ultimately I find their use of this concept to be too narrowly focused on what might be called the Augustinian folk-model of hope, as pointing down the linear path of time toward the better future. Thus, Harvey's (2000) focus on hope as optimism and Zournazi's (2002: 18) claim that revisiting hope can allow us to revisit possibilities of freedom, in my view, too narrowly conceive of hope as a future-orientation toward the good (for a critical engagement with recent anthropological adoptions of notions of the good and right, see Zigon 2014a).

Throughout this chapter, then, I will try to move away from these views of hope that either maintain the passive/active dichotomy or see it pointing toward the new and better future. This will be done through a critical hermeneutic analysis that recasts the traditional dichotomy of hope as either active or passive. That is, I will contend that hope cannot be rendered as an either/or, but instead should be considered in its shifting aspects of both/and (see also Hage 2003). To do this, I will try to show that hope as it was articulated by my Muscovite interlocutors is better considered as, on the one hand, an existential modality of being-in-the-world. In this way hope can be thought of as the temporal structure that allows one to keep going or persevere through one's life. This aspect of hope can be seen as similar to what is often characterized as the passive nature of hope. On the other hand, hope can take on the temporal orientation of conscious and intentional action in moments of moral breakdown. This aspect of hope is similar to what is often called the active nature of hope. As such, this aspect of hope is the temporalization process – the intentional and creative uses of the past and the future – that allows for intentional and ethical action (see also Zigon 2014b). In recasting hope in this way, we might begin to think of hope as a way of expressing the temporality of being-in-the-world. As such, we can better see how hope works not only as motivation for ethical activity in moments of breakdown but, perhaps more importantly, as a temporal structure for persevering through the life into which one has been thrown. In this way, hope is not necessarily aimed at the future good, but primarily at the perseverance of a sane life.

In support of this argument, I borrow heavily from Alain Badiou's reading of St Paul's concept of hope, and combine it with his view of ethics as motivated by the maxim 'keep going!'. For Badiou (2003: 93) hope is best characterized as perseverance and rendered by the 'maxim enjoining us to persevere in this trajectory'. Hope is that which enjoins us to 'keep going!' (Badiou 2001). In this way, Badiou challenges the traditional reading of Paul, which most likely has its roots in St Augustine, who writes that hope 'is concerned only with good things, with things future, with things pertaining to the one who purports to have the hope of them' (1953: 6). For most Christians, it is commonly understood that the primary future good to be hoped for is the salvation of immortality. But Badiou poses an important challenge to this reading of Paul and reinterprets the latter as intending hope as perseverance along the trajectory established by the event of Christ's resurrection. In this sense, hope is not simply a looking-forward-to-the-better-future, but more importantly it is a referencing back to the founding event that makes a certain kind of life possible (Badiou 2003). But such hope as persevering does not imply, as Heidegger (1996: 317) argues, that hope is

essentially past-oriented. Rather, while hope does reference back to a founding event, in this case Christ's resurrection, in this referencing back it allows, or perhaps it is better to say it necessitates, continuance. In this way temporality can be conceived of as the continuous recycling of past and future ecstasies in the constitution of multiple presences (Zigon 2014b), rather than a linear flow out of a past into a future. It is the former geometry of temporality that I suggest best describes the dynamics of hope.

Hope, then, as Badiou renders it, and as I will suggest many of my Muscovite interlocutors express it, does not for the most part look forward to the better, although it certainly does at times, but is principally a modality of maintaining the world as it has already been achieved through that world's founding event (for the prevalence of such a modality in Eastern Christianity, see Hann and Goltz 2010). In this sense then, persistent hope, following Badiou, is hope to maintain the world as it has been found and lived through. It should be pointed out, however, and this is essential, that new worlds can be established, as in Grigorii's entering the Seminary, after which it is this new world that is maintained through hope.

Nevertheless, this radical change of one's world is not always the main goal of hope. Instead, I suggest, it makes more sense to think of both aspects of hope as seeking to maintain what Talal Asad (2003) has called a sane life. To live sanely in the world is to practically know and to be known practically in the world. To live sanely in the world is not to have agency in the sense of resisting the social order or actively working for an ideal future. Rather, it is the attempt to live acceptably both for oneself and others, and to do so within the world in which one finds oneself (see also Mahmood 2005; Zigon 2011). In the rest of this chapter, I will show how my Muscovite interlocutors, by means of the two aspects of hope, attempt to do this.

'You can put your hopes in God, but you still have to act'

There is a Russian proverb that runs like this: you can put your hopes in God, but you still have to act (*na Boga nadeicya, a sam ne ploshai*). This proverb, I suggest, can be seen as formally articulating the hope of many of my interlocutors. For as the proverb suggests, one can indeed have hope in God, and in doing so remain, for the most part, passive. As I argued above, this 'passivity' is best thought of in terms of the temporal structure of the non-conscious everydayness of being-with. But this 'passivity' does not fully describe the nature of hope in God. For even in this most abstract of all hopes,

as the Holy Father indicated, one must perform some actions, for example prayer. The point of the proverb, then, is that this 'passive' hope in God is not enough. One must also act in order to realize hope. And while the hoped-for is not necessarily realized simply because one acts, both in this proverb and according to my Muscovite interlocutors, acting is indeed inseparable from hoping in many situations in their lives.

Take, for example, Andrei, a theatre director and teacher at an institute for theatre directors in Moscow. When I met him, Andrei was in his late-forties, and, as he put it, finally living the life he always hoped to have. But it did not come easy. He worked hard to get the position he now has, for example, accepting many jobs he did not want or that could not pay him, and sacrificing many other parts of his life, for example, a steady and good income and a wife. In fact, still today Andrei can afford little more than a small room in a communal flat on the outer edges of the city. Nevertheless, Andrei maintains the necessity of the connection between hope and acting in one's life. This is how he put it:

If you want to see your hopes fulfilled you need to have a strong will. I think that when I want to achieve something in my life I need to show everything I can do, I need to show people that I can do this or that or I have some skills and abilities. And in my opinion a person shouldn't be inert, he should act, work hard and never lose that energy that keeps everything moving forward.

Here we see Andrei slipping between the two aspects of hope. Hope for Andrei is not simply focused on a particular goal or act – in other words, it is not only the temporal orientation of the act-moment. Hope is also a way of life; it is the need to persevere. Hope is 'that energy that keeps everything moving forward'. As Badiou would put it, hope is the fidelity to a certain way of life. In Andrei's slippage, we see the workings of fidelity. For fidelity, like hope, has these same two aspects. On the one hand, to have fidelity is to have perseverance in the maintenance of a way of life. On the other hand, fidelity on occasion necessitates active and reflective work to reinforce that which must be maintained. This is what Andrei does. He perseveres with the energy of hope in the trajectory of his life, even and especially in the difficult times, and he also works hard to attain certain goals or overcome certain difficult times along the way of this life.

The same can be seen in the life of Irina. Irina is a twenty-six-year-old theatre actress who had recently moved to Moscow from a small city in Central Russia, and now works in the library of the same institute in which Andrei works, and to which she had unsuccessfully applied to be a student. Perhaps more than anyone else I came to know while living in Moscow, Irina had experienced much recent

hardship. Her experiences of being far from home in a large, demanding, and at times, unforgiving city, her general lack of success in finding work in the theatre, and her recent separation from her boyfriend would be enough, so it would seem, to leave her disheartened. Not so for Irina. When I asked her what she hoped for, she turned to her professional life first.

Well, I like my profession very much. It took me quite a long time to get to where I am today. It is not the end, of course, I still have a very long way to go. I want to develop as a person and as an actress, I want to achieve a high level of professionalism and move forward step by step. I don't want to be like a flash that goes out just after shining brightly. I want to cover very much in my life.

When I asked her if there was anything she could do to fulfil these hopes she told me, 'What can I do? I can do what I constantly do – work on myself in order to improve and be better. Being an actress means constant work. And it is very important to have a strong will, to have the ability to gather all your strength and move forward.'

The next time I met with Irina, I asked her about what she had said about hope and how she could have so much of it despite the hardships she had experienced.

Irina – When you are in a depression it seems that everything is very bad in life and everything is wrong and there is no way out. But you should always find one thing that you want to do, you have to find a goal and find some strength with which to fulfil this aim. This is hope. When you lose this purpose or you don't know what to do, you are lost. You need this hope.

Jarrett – So hope is something that you have to do, something you have to actively pursue?

Irina – Yes. In bad situations the only way is some kind of action, something you can do, you can't stay like that.

Jarrett – Does the realization of the hope depend only on the person who hopes and acts or is he constrained by outside circumstances?

Irina – Of course when you want to achieve a goal there are people around you who can impede or help, but they have no power compared to you. Everything comes from me. Everything depends on me.

Jarrett – So if your will is strong enough, then nothing can stop you?

Irina – Now everything depends on me and my strong will and my hopes. Nothing can stop it right now. But you never know, something really bad and unfortunate can happen and change everything.

Again, this is very interesting if not a bit over optimistic considering her current situation of not being able to find work in any theatres and not getting accepted into the director's institute to which she applied. Even though she does not admit it, Irina's hopes have been and are contingent on others. Hope is not centred on the individual will as Irina describes it in words, but is instead, as it is revealed in Irina's greater life narrative, a social relationship imbued with shifting levels of power. But perhaps it is this not-admitting of the contingency of hope that allows her to continue hoping. Perhaps it is this very denial of contingency that keeps Irina's hopes alive. Perhaps it is this denial that allows her to continue to work on herself and believe that her future is still in her own hands despite her lack of power in most of her social relationships.

In fact, there are deep cultural-historical roots that support both Andrei and Irina's focus on the necessity of individual's working on themselves to realize their hopes. And, indeed, as we saw with Grigorii and the Holy Father, and as will be seen in the next section, they were not the only ones who spoke in these terms. Not only can these roots be seen in the Orthodox image/likeness distinction I described above, but it can also be seen in the Soviet project of building the New Soviet Man, a project that clearly has its foundations in the Orthodox tradition of working on the self (Kharkhordin 1999). This Soviet project necessitated that individuals work on themselves not only to become proper socialist persons, but also to participate in the collective hope of realizing socialism in one country (Fitzpatrick 2005). Thus, the call to work on oneself was one heard and practised in various everyday and institutional contexts in the Soviet period, and one that remains central to post-Soviet conceptions of personhood (Ries 1997: 119; Fitzpatrick 2005; Zigon 2010, 2011).

As will become clear in the next section, it is this connection between hope and working on the self that helps many of my Muscovite interlocutors to continue living their lives as best they can, despite the hardships they face. For in both Andrei and Irina's case, they have maintained their hope in the face of continuous career disappointments and setbacks, and several personal difficulties. In the next section I will further elaborate on the connection between these kinds of hardships and the greater social context of contemporary Russia. For now, however, it is important simply to note that hope is that which is expressed as necessary in times that some might consider hopeless.

In this section, I have tried to show that in the words of my Muscovite interlocutors it is clear that hope cannot be simply rendered as either passive or active, but instead must be understood as a complex temporal concept that shifts from context to context and, in fact, within a particular context. Hope,

then, is a resource that can be called upon not only for perseverance, but also for the activity needed to maintain this perseverance. Hope as conceptualized by my Muscovite interlocutors is the fidelity to the life trajectory upon which one finds oneself.

Hope and hopelessness: the social context of hope

When Pandora opened her box and unleashed evil into the world, she was left only with hope. This origin myth suggests not only the necessity and power of hope for human life, but more importantly for our purposes, it reveals the conditions in which hope is manifest and put to use. While these conditions need not be as extreme as evil, certainly (as I was often told in Moscow and Irina's story shows) they are difficult. This difficulty most often took some socio-economic form in the narratives of my interlocutors. For this reason, hope was often in reference to career and family, and this reference was always an expression of hope for stability. Related to this is that hope was often described as arising most easily and effectively out of social conditions that are seemingly less than hopeful. That is to say, according to most of my interlocutors, hope is not something one has if life is comfortable and convenient. Hope does not arise in good times. Rather, hope is born out of the conditions of struggle. Hope is what we find when we might expect to find hopelessness – and as such, we always risk that slippage into hopelessness. As will become clear in this section, Irina and Andrei were not the only ones who told me of the importance of hope in times of hardship.

One sunny spring afternoon I was walking with Anna, a poet in her late twenties, each of us enjoying a bottle of beer on the crowded streets of central Moscow, when I told her how surprised I was about the way people were speaking to me about hope, that is, its necessity for life and when it is most important. She told me:

Yes, I agree and I absolutely agree with the famous expression: 'you live as long as there is hope' (*zhivyosh' poka est' nadezhda*), which means that you live even if everything is very, very bad around you because if you have hope you can live, you can survive, you cannot live without hope, if you have hope you can fight.

Anna's expression, which seems a bit awkward, was echoed, however, by many others with the much more common proverb – hope dies last (*nadezhda umiraet poslednei*). The anthropologist Dale Pesmen reports having heard people make

a connection between hope and *dusha*, which is glossed in English as soul and is still today one of the central colloquial and rhetorical markers of Russian identity: “If there’s soul, there’s hope”, “Filled with *dusha*” means full of hope’ (Pesmen 2000: 63). Whether one speaks of life, living or *dusha*, what is clear is that for many there is a definite and unbreakable relationship between living a human life and having hope.

As my conversation with Anna continued I told her that several people had also said that hope is very important for Russians – that to be Russian is to hope. She replied:

I think that is right in some way. Because you know our level of life isn’t as high as Europeans or Americans. So many people are now living for tomorrow and hoping that tomorrow will be better. They did the same fifty years ago when people were fighting for communist goals, when people hoped that the future would be better for their children. It is the same today.

I should add that Russians have been doing this for a very long time. Indeed, one could read the entire history of Russia – from at least the reign of Peter, but probably before – as a history of hope maintained by a history of temporal incongruity (Miyazaki 2003, 2004; see also Verdery 1995). But I am quick to ask: could we read any history differently?

The point, however, is that hope, according to my Muscovite interlocutors, is necessary to live through difficult times. One needs hope to fight. One needs hope to *perezhivat’* – to live through – or in more dire times, to *vyzhivat’* – to survive – the hardships and difficulties of life. Or as Badiou (2003: 93–94) would put it, one needs hope to persevere, to keep going. As Anna said, hope was not only needed in the past, in history, but it is also necessary today. During a time when most of my interlocutors worked on at least two jobs, and most worked on more, just to maintain some kind of comfortable life in what has become one of the most expensive cities in the world, it is not surprising that they spoke to me about the hope to keep going and to eventually live what Russians call a normal life (*normal’naya zhizn’*). A normal life is simply that, a life of stability without too many worries. As one of my interlocutors once put it to me only partially joking, a normal life is being able to come home after a hard day of work, grab a beer and sit in front of the television. In a social context where most of my interlocutors leave home early in the morning and do not return again until very late in the evening after their second or third job, there is no time for the normalcy of enjoying a beer in front of the television, let alone enjoying free time with friends or family on any kind of regular basis.

This lack of a normal life is intimately tied with the greater socio-economic situation in Russia today. This became clear in something Anna once told me. One evening I went to Anna's for dinner. When we sat down at the table, I found myself face to face with a bowl of about fifty shrimp – one hundred beady, black eyes staring at me as if they were still begging for mercy. At first I was a bit taken back. After all, my past experiences with shrimp, like with most meat and fish in the United States, was of the peeled and packaged kind. I was not used to eating anything with the head and eyes still there, still staring. I tried to make light of it by telling Anna; she gave me a polite chuckle in response and immediately went into the importance of shrimp in Russian life, a fact that I had never known and would never have guessed. The most interesting part of the story, for our purposes, was related to hope, or more specifically, the lack thereof. For as Anna put it, 'Russia is like Dante's inferno – leave all your hope outside.' This lack of hope is metaphorically evident, at least as Anna sees it, because of the price of shrimp. It used to be, so I was told, maybe five or so years ago, you could buy about a half a kilo of shrimp for about one dollar (it was interesting that she used the dollar and not rubles in her story). But now, the price is closer to two or three dollars.

This is because the business in the East is run by mafia and they sell their shrimp to Japan, China and Korea – they really like shrimp and things like it there. But this is criminal! We call it Soviet capitalism. A few years ago maybe there was some hope, some reason to think all would turn out all right, but now we get shrimp here in Moscow from Norway. Can you believe it?

At the time of this research in the early 2000s, millions of Russians still depended on their own or relative's gardens to eat. My interlocutors as a whole were politically apathetic, a condition that the Putin regime at that time and now uses to its advantage to secure centralized control. Add to this the fact that people's homes, the giant, monolithic apartment complexes built most famously under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, are crumbling under their very feet. Pipes are leaking and heating is no longer, if it ever was, very reliable. The future for many of my interlocutors, despite an apparent economic boom related to the high price of oil, did not look so bright. There was not much reason to have hope. But yet, despite the fact that I heard quite a bit about hopelessness, I heard much, much more about hope.

For Anna, the price and national origin of shrimp in Russia reveals the hopelessness of living in post-Soviet Russia. Perhaps in that moment of our dinner, this was true for her. But several other times, Anna expressed to me

the importance of hope, the necessity of hope for living life. Remember, she is just one of the people who told me that one lives only as long as one has hope. But Anna was not the only one who used a particular consumer product as a metaphor to talk to me about the slippage between hope and hopelessness. Dima, a musician and former heroin user in his early thirties, who at the time worked for a foreign NGO, did the same. He used the metaphor of a car – or more specifically, an automobile plant.

When I told Dima that I had read somewhere that today there is no hope in Russia, he told me:

I don't think it is really hopeless. Because there is some inner culture within most Russian people that they don't always show, but it is still there . . . But I don't know if they can learn, in the sense of, I think one of the Russian habits is to lose interest quickly in some things. Just imagine, you think you have mastered something and then it is not of interest to you any more. You don't want to continue with it. A lot of Russians are like that. But speaking of hope, I think deep inside everyone still has some hope that their life will improve. It is just that people tend to think globally; I think a good way out for Russia would be if everyone started thinking about themselves. Thinking about their lives and not thinking about the fate of Russia as a whole, of course it is important to keep that in mind too, this is our birthplace. Of course people would like to live a better life. But there is a serious chance that they will lose interest as soon as they get close to it. Imagine that you are working at a car factory and you have a small role to play in assembling a car. And after several months, you lose interest in it. People don't have this mentality that if I do my part well and if everyone else does their part well, then the car will be a good car, we will assemble a good car. It is not like that, not at all. People prefer to complain about their jobs or the shitty cars they put out.

Although expressed in a manner that echoes the overly individualistic and capitalist spirit of the post-Soviet period, Dima expresses the slippage between hope and hopelessness in a way that reveals the importance of hope for being-in-the-world. For Dima, like Andrei, hope is maintained by focusing on the task at hand – whether that task is working hard at one's job or working on one's self to develop skills, to become a better, more honest person, or just to maintain what has already been accomplished; to persevere with the status quo. These are the hopes of Dima. But it should not be thought that in order to persevere with the already accomplished, one need not continue to 'develop' or work on oneself, for the status quo itself must be maintained. When I asked Dima what he hopes for and if there is anything he can do about it, he told me that he just hopes to stay

on the same track that he is on now in terms of his career and with his fiancée. In order to do this he needs to continue to work on himself – to make himself a ‘better person’ than he is now. ‘Of course I need to develop. I need to develop personally, professionally. I guess that is a lot already.’ Indeed. But again it should be noticed that the hope for development is just another way of expressing a hope to stay on the same track. That is, Dima’s hope is an expression of fidelity to the life he already lives.

Dima was not alone in using cars as a metaphor for hope. Olya, an active Russian Orthodox and schoolteacher in her mid-twenties, also spoke of cars in relation to hope. But if Dima, like Anna, spoke about that precarious coupling of hope and hopelessness in contemporary Russia, then Olya focused only on the importance, or I should say, the necessity of hope for not only Russians but for being-in-the-world in general. Truly this says something about all three of their personalities, for while Anna and Dima are sceptics playing with cynicism, Olya is always the optimist. Thus, while for Anna and Dima hope must be continuously maintained so as to avoid slippage into the ever-present despair of hopelessness, for Olya that slippage is impossible. For once that slippage occurs, all is lost. Life ceases and one merely exists. This is so because, as she put it, hope is the petrol of life. On two separate occasions she used this metaphor to talk to me about hope.

On the first occasion, Olya was telling me about how contemporary Russia, and in particular Moscow, can be a place of hopelessness. But this cannot be maintained. Life is impossible in hopelessness. Without hope, one has no energy to continue. As Olya put it, ‘If you compare life with a car: you put a lot of petrol inside but you don’t know where you will stop. You go right and left and the petrol will finish and you will not reach the goal. But if you go straight ahead, you will reach the goal with plenty of petrol left remaining.’ Thus for Olya, if one has meaning and purpose in life – and for Olya these are intimately tied with the Orthodox faith – then one will have plenty of petrol – hope – to fulfil them. Without the focus, without the meaningful activity, the hope runs dry.

On another occasion, I was telling both Olya and her friend Larisa about how so many people were talking to me about the importance of hope in their life. They were not surprised. Olya went on to tell me:

I think a person can be compared to a car, for example, the body [here she points to her heart]. The engine is our heart and all our feelings inside they make us move in our lives. And hope is the petrol. With no hope we cannot move because a person who is hopeless has no life he only exists. He doesn’t live. He doesn’t have a full life.

Larisa agreed: 'And besides, hope helps you not to be desperate in a desperate situation. When you lose your hope you become desperate.' Both Olya and Larisa agree that hope is that which gives one the strength, will, and the energy to live. While Olya, I think, was focusing on the necessity of hope for living a human life – what I have been calling hope as the temporal structure of being-in-the-world – Larisa teased out one of the implications that Olya was making. That is, hope is also that which allows us not to become 'desperate in a desperate situation'. Or to put it in my terms, active hope is the temporal orientation of intentional and ethical action, and is that which allows for acting in those moments of breakdown or what Larisa called desperate situations. Active hope maintains one through; it allows one to live through the breakdown and return to the existential structure of persistent hope as the temporal structure of unreflective being-in-the-world.

I believe that we can see this play between hope as the existential temporal structure of being-in-the-world and hope as the temporal orientation of ethical action when we look at what my interlocutors told me they hope for. When I asked what one hoped for, the most common response I heard was that the person hoped for a family or for children. There is no doubt that this was more commonly articulated by my female interlocutors. Thus, for example, Olya, Larisa and Anna all told me that their biggest hope is to get married someday. As for the married women, they hoped to have children. But it was certainly important for the men as well. Dima told me that he hopes one day to marry his fiancée and Grigorii told me that he hopes to meet a woman who he can marry. It should be noted that Grigorii's hope is actually twofold. Not only would he like to marry, but he also needs to marry. For as a seminary student, he cannot become a priest until he is married. Even the Holy Father with whom I spoke told me that he *hopes to continue* to be a good husband and father to his children.

But even if one is able to marry and have a family, life does not promise to be easy in Russia today. Once when I was talking with Aleksandra Vladimirovna, a very serious Orthodox believer in her mid-fifties, about the role of the family and parenting in contemporary Russia, she told me:

Because of their social position, because their stability was ruined, they are very unstable, and jobless, and practically so poor that, you know, the main thought is how to feed the children, not how to educate them or how to bring them up. They have to work so hard and they are in such despair, and the men took to drinking and fathers, fathers do not exist as upbringers, at least for a number of families. So there is so much despair and they have no hope, it is very difficult.

Here again we see the coupling of hope with hopelessness. Not only Aleksandra Vladimirovna, but many consider that which is hoped for the most as a hopeless situation. But in such situations some are most able to perform hope. In such hopeless situations, breakdowns occur often. When the breakdown occurs, my interlocutors actively hope in order to return to the world. But that this world – in this case the world of the family – is not completely hopeless is revealed by the fact that nearly everyone wants to either return to it or enter it for the first time.

According to Aleksandra Vladimirovna, the family is a place of hopelessness because of the economic situation in the country. People cannot afford to raise a family properly. There are not enough jobs and the ones that exist do not pay enough. For many Russians, the economic and employment situation in contemporary Russia appears hopeless. And yet this was the second-most common topic of people's hopes. Over and over I heard how people hope to secure good jobs or to be successful in their careers. Irina hopes to be a successful theatre actor and director. Dima hopes 'to finally graduate and then continue studying and then go on with my job and my life, no big goals to change the world or anything like that'. Vera, an actress who has performed in both the theatre and film, hopes 'to make my own movie. I know how I want to do it but I know that it is not real in our country – although I must say that in our country the more unreal something is the more possible it becomes. Although for now it's only a hope, I know for sure that someday I will do it. I just have to get prepared very well'. In each case, they are working toward the fulfilment of their hope. They are actively hoping. And in each case, just like with the family, they are actively hoping in a situation of potential hopelessness. But such is the case with hope. For as Ernst Bloch (1996: 5) put it, hopelessness is 'the most insupportable thing, downright intolerable to human needs.' Thus, in such situations my interlocutors actively hope, for they never know when it actually is the case that 'the more unreal something is the more possible it becomes'.

In this section I have tried to disclose the two aspects of hope through the narrative articulations by my Muscovite interlocutors of the necessary coupling of hope and hopelessness. As such we get a glimpse at the two aspects of hope I have been trying to describe – hope as the temporal structure of everyday being-in-the-world, and hope as the temporal orientation of intentional and reflective ethical action that becomes necessary in moments of moral breakdown. As the unreflective temporal structure of being-in-the-world, hope is revealed as that striving toward the not-yet-but-expected of the promised socio-historic-cultural ideal. These promised ideals should not be confused with utopias, as Bloch and others might have it (e.g. Harvey 2000). Rather, they are much more mundane – for

example, a family or success in a career. Many times, my Muscovite interlocutors such as Dima told me, one simply hopes to maintain that which has already been achieved. When such strivings are utopian, if we can call them that, the goal tends to be equally unimpressive – stability. In this sense, hope as the unreflective temporal structure of being-in-the-world is the temporality for living a sane life.

On the other hand, hope is revealed as the temporal orientation of intentional and ethical action in moments of moral breakdown. This is so not only in the future-oriented character of the act, but just as importantly in the way the past is reoriented within the act. It is with this double movement of both the future and past temporal ecstasies that the present of the act is constituted. It is through this temporalizing ethical action that one is able to return safely to the existential comfort of everyday being-in-the-world. While it is true that such hopeful acting can occasionally result in radical changes at both the social and personal levels, it is much more often the case that persons and worlds change through such acts only just enough to allow one to once again live sanely in that world. In other words, through active hoping one is able to return safely to the world of persevering hope.

Some closing words

Throughout this chapter I have intentionally blurred the line between the two aspects of hope – persevering hope as the temporal structure of unreflective being-in-the-world and active hope as the temporal orientation of intentional and ethical action. In doing so, I have responded to Miyazaki's call to use hope as a method (2004), for this blurring is meant to demonstrate the slippage between the two aspects of hope expressed by my interlocutors. Hope not only dies last, but it is also the energy, the petrol that allows my Muscovite interlocutors to live and act. These two ways of describing hope reflect the two aspects of hope. These aspects can be viewed in the way that Crapanzano (2004: 222), invoking linguistic terminology, writes about them as either stative or performative, which correlate, to some degree, with the object of hope as either abstract and vague or concrete and specific.

But I do not think this goes far enough. For hope is more than a way of expressing an attitude about and toward one's life or some object. Rather, as my Muscovite interlocutors describe hope, in its two aspects hope is the temporal structure and orientation of living sanely and ethically acting in their worlds. As Olya put it, without hope we do not live, we merely exist, and as Larisa added, it

is hope that allows us to act in moments of breakdown. In this way, it would be inappropriate to correlate persevering hope with a stative and active hope with a performative manner of speaking. For just as it has been argued that all utterances are in fact performatives of some kind, so too we can argue that both aspects of hope are performative in that both persevering hope and active hope are simply two aspects of the temporality of being-in-the-world. That is to say, the temporality of the ontological condition for being human is that of hope. For to live a human life entails both a persevering hope through the everyday routines of that life, but also the active hope to keep going through the breakdowns that are inevitable.

Although it is beyond the ethnographic limitations of this chapter to address in any detail the experience of waiting, perhaps the hermeneutic disclosure of these two aspects of hope can shed light on the phenomenon of waiting. Just as my hermeneutic of hope disclosed that the passive/active dichotomy is not simply 'about' acting as such, but rather an articulation of the temporality of two different modalities of being-in-the-world, so too we can interrogate waiting in its various modalities that go beyond 'the problematic of our agency' (Hage 2009: 2). For this chapter has disclosed hope as an ontological condition for any action at all, what Hannah Arendt would call 'the human condition', and, I suggest, a similar analysis could be done on the phenomenon of waiting so as to go beyond a sociological structure/agency concern of whether or not 'things are beyond our control . . . as opposed to actively doing something or another' (Hage 2009: 2). Such an analysis, however, I will have to leave to others.

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Note

- 1 This research was done with these two 'groups' because at that time in post-Soviet Russia artists and practising Orthodox Christians were among the most publicly articulate about the perceived societal-wide moral breakdown of the country and how things could become otherwise. While I make no claim that these two 'groups'

represent or speak for Muscovites or Russians in general, as those who most persistently and vocally articulated concerns of hope and hopelessness, I engaged them as those who not only were thinking through their particular socio-historic condition, but more importantly for my research, the human condition.

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Time and the Other: Waiting and Hope among Irregular Migrants

Synnøve Bendixsen and Thomas Hylland Eriksen

Once I placed a glass over a bee and imprisoned it. ... It wandered around in the glass for two days until it understood that there was no way out and then decided that there was nothing to do but sit in a corner motionless and wait and wait, not knowing what it was waiting for.

–Orhan Pamuk, *Silent House*, 2012: 25

If, by chance or necessity, your wanderings in Oslo took you past St James Church (*Jakobskirken*) in Hausmannsgata between April 2011 and October 2012, you would inevitably have noticed a clutch of seven or eight green and white, big and small tents, placed next to the church, on a lawn between a bus stop and the river Akerselva. The area encompassed by this improvised camp was cordoned off with broad, white tape, and the entrance was adorned with photos of crying people in what appeared to be a war zone, along with a white sign proclaiming ‘WELCOME TO THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMP!’ above a Palestinian flag. A large banner carrying the slogan ‘No humans are illegal’, black letters on red fabric, faced the street, facilitating legibility for passers-by. If you were to have ventured into the camp, you would have been likely to have been welcomed by a young Palestinian who explained that this was presently his home, and that of twenty-four other men. Visitors were often offered a cup of sweet mint tea, shared, perhaps, with a youth from a pro-Palestinian group, a student, a Norwegian neighbour or a sympathiser who dropped by with money, food, clothes, furniture or news and a bit of encouragement. The party tent used for entertaining visitors was equipped with two threadbare couches and a dinner table brought by activists and Palestinian migrants who worked in pizza or kebab restaurants in the neighbourhood. It had a white plastic roof for protection against rain and

falling autumn leaves. Some had written their names or their day and place of birth on the white canvas walls, such as ‘Came to Norway on 23-6-09, got final rejection from UDI¹ ... and live on the street ...’ or ‘2 years in Norway but live on the street’. Next to these messages was an embroidered picture featuring the word ‘Palestine’.

The Palestinian tented camp was established by irregular migrants and activists from the alternative house Blitz, an informal grouping associated with punk culture and anarchism. The authorities removed the camp only after eighteen months, and its instigators proclaimed it to be the longest continuous demonstration in Norway, in spite of its ultimate failure. Their objective was to focus on the Norwegian authorities’ treatment of Palestinian asylum seekers, and to put pressure on them to re-evaluate their applications and the general legitimacy of Palestinians as political refugees. All applications had been rejected in the first instance.

Ethnographic research on irregular migrants often emphasizes the migrants’ limited freedom of action owing to the severity of state control, the inactive time spent waiting, the fear of deportation and the lack of meaning felt by people who find themselves in this liminal situation (de Genova and Peutz 2010; Thomsen et al. 2010). Similarly, during Bendixsen’s fieldwork among irregular migrants in Oslo and Bergen, she spoke to many migrants who held the view that everyday life was empty and meaningless, regardless of the everyday activities such as eating and sleeping, because they could neither work, continue their education nor start a family. Their life situation was characterized by uncertainty; they were perennially waiting for a letter from UDI or UNE,² for their lawyer to call or for papers that would strengthen their application for asylum. However, Bendixsen also did fieldwork among migrants who mobilized, protested and actively tried to influence their situation, like the Palestinian migrants in the tented camp. The political mobilization of these migrants may say something about the ways in which non-citizens can be politically active (Bendixsen 2017), but their situation was deeply defined through their condition of waiting. The everyday world of experience among the Palestinians in the tented camp, as for other irregulars, was marked by uncertainty, a temporal limbo and a fear of enforced return. The contrast with the surrounding society – fast-paced, temporally regimented, fuelled by neoliberal production regimes and lubricated by North Sea oil – was striking and signifies not only two kinds of temporality but also implied power discrepancies.

This chapter, which is based on Bendixsen’s ethnographic fieldwork on irregular migrants in Norway from 2011 to 2013,³ problematizes the notion of

‘waiting’ as a homogeneous condition or state of being, by showing the ways in which irregular migrants relate to waiting in different ways. *La durée*, Bergson’s (2001 [1889]) concept for the temporality of subjective human experience – which he contrasted to mechanical, quantifiable time – ebbs and flows in speed and intensity. It can be cyclical and repetitive, but also linear and cumulative; it can be fast or slow (Eriksen 2001), oriented towards the future or towards the past, as in Schütz’s (1967 [1932]) distinction between ‘because’ and ‘in order to’ motivations for action, the former justifying a cause of action by referring to the past, the latter pointing to future-oriented projects. Whereas Bergson posits *la durée* as an ahistorical condition threatened by the quantifying and standardizing discipline of industrialism, Walter Benjamin, in an important critique of Bergson, superimposes a Marxist teleology on the contrasting, or competing, temporal regimes (Benjamin 1968 [1939]), seeing a transcendence of capitalism both as an escape from mechanical time and as a source of new forms of creativity. Seen from this perspective, the empty, flexible time entailed by waiting may have a transformative or even revolutionary potential. Or, in Bergson’s (1935) own terms, the *durée* entailed in waiting constitutes an open time oriented towards the future, as opposed to the closed time in which action is contingent on past expectations and frozen arrangements.

Waiting constitutes a particular kind of temporality. As famously argued by E. P. Thompson (1967), a major rupture from pre-capitalist to industrial capitalist societies concerned the quantification of work routines. In the modern capitalist world, accordingly, waiting is seen unambiguously as wasted time to be avoided if possible since ‘time is money’ (cf. Schweizer 2008: 3–5). This is also how many of the migrants experience their long wait, where life is ‘on hold’. However, waiting can also be transformed into an active kind of time, provided it can be filled with meaningful content. As we will show, some of the migrants pursue strategies enabling them to turn empty waiting into an open-ended activity; as noted by Mountz (2011), life experiences such as sickness, marriage and childbirth may punctuate the otherwise empty waiting time for some migrants.

The bee in the quote from Orhan Pamuk at the beginning of our chapter brings to mind both the power in making someone wait, and the uncertainty of waiting. Notwithstanding Hage’s (2009) interdisciplinary volume and a scattering of earlier contributions, like Schwartz’s (1975) pioneering work about power, the state and waiting (for services), or Bourdieu’s work on time, waiting and power in Kabylia (Bourdieu 1977), the phenomenology of waiting and its social implications remains understudied (but see Brekke 2004; Bayart 2007; Auyero 2012). Considering the life situation of migrants and refugees, it is

scarcely a coincidence that several recent studies discuss waiting in the context of migration (Brekke 2010; Gray 2011; Mountz 2011; Griffiths et al. 2013).

What is it that we 'do' when we wait for something, given that waiting is normally defined as the opposite of 'doing' something? In what way can waiting be converted into political resistance? Waiting does in fact entail an engagement based on anticipation – an in-order-to motivation – of an improved life. How do conceptualizations of the future influence the ways in which people wait? And what can we say about people's capacity to act in future-oriented ways even in a condition of temporal limbo? Conversely, under which circumstances does the transformation of waiting into directed activity fuelled by hope and anticipation morph back into a passive state?

Taking, as a starting point, the subjective temporalities of the Palestinians in Oslo and their attempts to transcend the empty liminality of their situation, we will explore how they convert empty and meaningless time to an 'active waiting time' (Gasparini 1995; Brun 2015). We also contrast the slow, circular and directionless time of the refugee camp with the accelerated, neoliberal temporality of the global information age characterizing the Norwegian society in which the camp was located. We thus aim to demonstrate people's capacity to act under conditions of limited autonomy, and to create future-oriented projects under a temporal regime refusing them a defined future.

Talking about the future inevitably prompts questions about the exact temporality of the future (next year? in twenty years? in the next century? after the end of civilization as we know it?). We will take pains to distinguish between different temporal horizons. It should also be noted that hope, anticipation and an often undefined notion and uncertainty of 'the future' does not merely characterize the situation of irregular migrants, or of migrants as such (Griffiths et al. 2013), but is indeed a feature of the human condition. 'The future' is a time when everything falls into place, and it can be any time – or it can be, from a perspective of eschatology, a time of collapse and disaster, which can also in principle occur at any time.

Irregularity and the phenomenology of waiting

Being an irregular migrant implies that you do not have legal residence in the country, and your status excludes you from rights requiring citizenship or a permit of residence; in the Norwegian case, when the irregular is above 18 years old this would include education, work and access to public health services

beyond urgent healthcare. It can be assumed that most of the irregular migrants in Norway are former asylum seekers whose application has been rejected, and who have stayed on informally. It is by definition impossible to count irregular migrants, and researchers have estimated the number of irregulars in Norway as somewhere between 18,100 and 56,000 (Mohn et al. 2014). While some continue to live in asylum centres, others live among friends, family or by themselves. Irregularity, moreover, is not a static condition. A person may shift between being a bona fide asylum seeker, an irregular (or illegal) immigrant, an asylum seeker again (if s/he appeals to UNE), and a regular migrant, following a change in legislation or bureaucratic practice. Policy is sufficiently complex, shifting and ambiguous for many migrants to be uncertain about their actual legal status. Recent research on the social and political production of illegality and of 'illegal subjects' (de Genova 2010; Khosravi 2010; Chimienti and Solomos 2011; Bendixsen 2015a) shows the ways in which the categorization as illegal shapes people's lives in fundamental ways, depriving them of rights and resources taken for granted by most and forced to get by through illegal means in the informal sector. Life as an irregular migrant has variously been described as 'wasted' (Bauman 2004) or ephemeral because you can at any time be deported, unceremoniously and routinely, since you are 'outside the law' (Agamben 1998). Maria Amelie, the most famous irregular migrant in Norway owing to her bestselling autobiographical book (Amelie 2010), says that whenever someone knocked on their door in her adolescence, she and her parents immediately feared that it might be the police who had come to deport them. They could not own a credit card or a car, or walk on a red traffic light, owing to the statistically minuscule, but not unthinkable possibility that they might be asked for an ID by a policeman. The lives of irregular migrants are framed by unpredictability, insecurity, uncertainty and indeterminacy (Kjærre 2010; Andersson 2014; Khosravi 2014). They have been deprived of the right to structure their own time or even to participate in the pre-structured temporality of the modern work regime. Their *durée* therefore comes across as worthless since it is neither chosen nor open-ended.

Waiting can be understood as an empty gap appearing in the interstices between events (Gasparini 1995), but as pointed out by Eriksen (2005), empty time can also be a prerequisite for creativity, since it is only when nothing in particular happens that anything can happen. So waiting cannot merely be defined as empty time devoid of events. It implies a lack of something that may – or perhaps will – sooner or later happen. The psychological state of waiting suspends and brackets activities. The natural flow of life will resume only when

the period of waiting has ended, whether the object of anticipation is your union with the person you love or the arrival of a delayed ferry. Waiting has been described as an 'inactive activity' (Crapanzano 1985), as a 'temporal deviation' (Schweizer 2004: 779) or as being 'out of sync with time' (Brun 2015: 23). The schism between anticipations and events may create an awareness of the passage of time, but also of its lack of direction. To irregular migrants who experience that their lives are on hold until they receive a residence permit, everyday routines may come across as meaningless and are pursued not as living but as mere survival in so far as they take place in a context devoid of direction and content. As Øian (1998) shows in a study of young, unemployed people of both genders, their lack of work also entails a lack of leisure; by default, the unemployed have no holidays or afternoons off work. This is the kind of situation the refugees in the camp were trying to transcend, as we will show later.

Waiting, moreover, entails powerlessness. The ability to make others wait, a familiar way of exerting power by bureaucrats and businesspeople worldwide (Schwartz 1975; some might want to add famous singers, doctors and dentists to the list), turns the subjectivity of waiting into a commitment 'to wait for everything to come from others' (Bourdieu 2000: 237). Waiting thus expresses a domination by others. Through the very act of acquiescent waiting, you show that you have accepted the loss of your control over your own time. Thus, waiting generates vulnerability and humiliation, and its distribution in society is a precise index of power discrepancies. Otherwise very different marginalized groups share the experience of enforced waiting, a tangible expression of their dependence and lack of personal autonomy (Auyero 2012).

When people continue to acquiesce in their waiting, they may express hope, in brief, an orientation towards the future. Yet people's attitudes towards, and experiences of, the waiting process may vary greatly. Gasparini (1995) distinguishes between actors who wait for something indefinite and those who expect something specific to take place at a specific time. The latter are in greater control of their situation than the former, and have a real possibility to influence it; as Gasparini says, 'Control can ... be viewed as forecasting or anticipation – and, therefore, as expectation – which is biased and influenced by the actor in question' (1995: 31). Yet events do not always take place at the expected time, and in the aftermath of one or several thwarted attempts to forecast decisive events, people may – as we will show – oscillate between a definite condition of waiting and an indefinite one. Or they may find ways of acting upon their situation, breaking out of the frustrations of open-ended waiting.

Waiting is a congested crossroads clogging the route leading from the present to the future, but it is also a somewhat itchy, unpleasant chasm between certainty and uncertainty. Lengthy waiting drives you into a rut, or what Hage (2009) calls stuckedness. You become stuck in a liminal phase eating its way backwards and forwards in time, thereby making a mess of both the 'because' and the 'in order to' clauses for justifying courses of action. The arrow of time morphs into a crumpled sheet of paper. Quite unlike a *durée* that holds out the promise of organic growth or the realization of subjectivity, so often conceptualized by anthropologists as 'the notion that lived experience is grounded in an emergent, flux-like historical process or total relational field' (Hodges 2008: 415), this temporality is stillborn.

We should also say a few words of clarification about the active/passive mode. Although waiting may well be regarded, and is commonly seen, as a 'blockage of action' (Piaget 1981) and as a 'passive activity' producing powerlessness, helplessness and vulnerability (Crapanzano 1985), the political theorist and Beckett connoisseur Paul Corcoran (1989; see also Lakha 2009) views waiting in analogy with 'stalking a prey', as a kind of 'strong and purposeful action' where the waiting person is ready to take action as soon as the opportunity arises. Quite clearly, how to interpret a period of waiting relies not only on its objective circumstances (the likelihood that the object of anticipation will be realized), but also on the ways in which actors relate to the liminal gap time. Just as there are degrees of hope, there are degrees of activity and passivity.

Waiting for nothing

What are irregular migrants waiting for? The answer varies between contexts and persons. The consequences of waiting vary too. Rundell (2009: 51) asserts that '[w]e all wait for futures – yet not for the same ones, nor in the same way, nor at the same tempo'. Irregular migrants in Norway wait for an answer to their appeal to UNE, for changes in politics or policy, for documentation strengthening their case, for a call from their lawyer or for something unspecified to happen. What they have in common is a hope for a permanent permit of residence, which can be seen as a condensed symbol of their strivings, hopes and anticipations. Among the Palestinians, this ultimate aim was expressed in various ways. One of the T-shirts they produced and sold to pay for food and electricity, depicted an angry cartoon face wrapped in a Palestinian scarf, bearing the legend 'Give me the damn papers!'. This expression was also used during demonstrations, along

with slogans such as 'Residence permit for Palestinian refugees' and 'Everybody has the right to a place to live', 'No human being is illegal', and on one of the tents a resident had written 'My dream is to live safely –!'. During conversations with the Palestinian migrants, many recurrently returned to the prospect of acquiring legal documents enabling them to start a family, work or study. Their conceptualizations of the future were mainly tied to the pivotal point in time when they acquired their permit of residence. This projected event was their main point of reference for the future and a main motivation for continued waiting, which indicates the limitations of the opportunity space in which they found themselves. To them, the period of waiting would end only then, although many feared enforced return as a less desirable, but perhaps equally likely, end of the waiting period.

The political mobilization instigated by the irregular Palestinians must be understood on the basis of both their irregularity and their statelessness, as often pointed out by the residents of the camp. In their view, this made them a special category of asylum seekers. Until 2008, many Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank were granted asylum in Norway. A policy change in 2008 limited their rights to asylum. More recently arrived Palestinians thus found themselves at a dead end, having had their applications rejected, but they continued to stay in Norway in the hope that things might change.

In February 2011, Palestinian asylum seekers and irregular migrants organized a demonstration in front of the parliament in Oslo, pleading with the Norwegian authorities to re-evaluate their claims to asylum. Participants, who had learned about the initiative largely through a Facebook group for Palestinians in Norway, came from around the country. Hamza, one of the initiators of the demonstration and subsequent developments, explains that during this demonstration, they were approached by young activists from Blitz, offering for them to sleep in the Blitz house, a ramshackle city block that had itself been occupied illegally or semi-legally by punk rockers and anti-authoritarian activists since the early 1980s. What was initially planned as a one-off demonstration grew into a long-term mobilization, with activists from Blitz offering knowledge and skills about how to stage demonstrations in Norway (e.g. obtaining a permit from the police) and help to shape the content of speeches. After nearly two months of demonstrations in central Oslo during early spring 2011, the mobilization grew, and now included slogans such as 'Palestinians seek asylum from the Israeli war machine' and 'We want a chance'. Eventually, two large party tents were raised on Eidsvoll Plass, an oblong square connecting the parliament with the National Theatre in downtown Oslo. Police soon arrived in great numbers to explain

that the demonstration was illegal, and that the tents must be removed. Asmar explained to the chief police officer why they demonstrated:

I'm saying, you know how many people are getting paperless. They have the only choice to go to the street and when they go to the street, you know, like underground society, which have everything wrong. And we choose not to. That's why we are here, that's why we try. And I think in my opinion we are doing Norway a favour. You don't want us? OK. Find a solution. But don't leave us in the street. We are here representing 700 Palestinians. Many of them – they live now for two, four or more years without paper. They have to do black work, they have to ... I don't know. These 700 people, they don't want this, they don't want to be paperless, they don't want to be an underground society. They want to be in the open, but the government is forcing us to be paperless. ... So help us. Find a solution, that's what we are trying to do. And I think this is in favour of us *and* in favour of Norway. Otherwise we ... I don't know what other choices we have.

Asmar's appeal was to no avail, but he succeeded in juxtaposing the temporality of waiting with the legality of legitimate work by pointing out that the uncertainty facing migrants in a judicial limbo makes it impossible for them to adjust to the time-space of mainstream Norwegian society. This is why they are out of sync, out of *kilter*, in the wrong place, living the wrong temporality. Through migration law and control mechanisms, the authorities regulate the lives of these migrants and enable a situation of temporariness and unpredictability. Referring to their restricted opportunity space for making choices, Asmar intimates that the decisions by the authorities shape and restrict the migrants' possible futures (see also Sigona and Hughes 2012; Andersson 2014; Griffiths 2014; Khosravi 2014). An explicit goal for the authorities is to evict rejected asylum seekers as swiftly as possible (Bendixsen and Lidén 2017). The emphasis on fast eviction as a measure of strong governance is meant to strengthen popular trust in the asylum system by showing efficacy and vigour in their border control. Seen from the perspective of the irregulars, this measure is rightly understood as expressing a lack of trust from the authorities and creates a heightened sense of precarity.⁴ Long after the demolition of the Palestinian camp, at the height of the Syrian refugee crisis in spring 2016, UDI ran a poster campaign tempting irregulars to opt for assisted return with promises of a 10,000 NOK (€1100) cash reward for the first 500 to take the bait.

Having been evicted from the city centre of Oslo, the Palestinians moved and expanded their camp. The new location, next to St James Church, was proposed by the Blitz activists. They correctly believed that the church management

would allow the Palestinians to stay. St James Church is the city's only 'cultural church', and performs no regular church services. Its management is known for a progressive approach to diversity and multiculturalism, and hosts a broad range of cultural activities involving different segments of Oslo's diverse population. Upon arrival, the activists approached the verger of the church, informing him of their presence. The latter then phoned the police to explain, laconically, that the church was aware of the situation, and that there was no need for police to come, since the church owned the land.

And so they moved in, a score and then some of young or youngish Palestinian men; although a few women had taken part in the demonstrations, they never moved into the camp, since, as a rule, young Palestinian women are actively discouraged from living in the immediate vicinity of unmarried, unrelated young men.

At this early stage, the waiting was intimately tied to an expectation of a pending change in their legal status. The assumption was that when the Norwegian public, including the media, realized how the authorities had treated the irregular Palestinians, they would put pressure on the government to change its policy. We asked Basher (22), who had lived in Norway for two years, why he chose to participate in the protracted demonstration:

Because we have been waiting for long time to get positive answer or even a negative. It's just that period. I can't just stay one year waiting for an answer. And I think that we have the right to have a positive or to stay legally in Norway because of the Oslo agreement. You know about it. And I don't know why they act with us like this.

A Norwegian activist, standing next to us, asks: 'Was there any dialogue?'

No, they didn't contact us or any refugees. We just wait for our answer. And even if you try to call to know what your situation is, they will say 'don't call me again, if I need something, I will call you'. So we just have to wait ... one year, two years, three, no difference. And we know that time is money. Time is no difference here.

Synnøve asked, 'And what were you hoping to gain with the demonstration?'

What I hope to gain with the demonstration? A normal life after the demonstration. That they [Norwegians] know much more about us, about our situation. And we were hoping that they have some mercy, but I don't see this. So we will continue our demonstration until we know what we will do. Either we stay illegally, or you can just send us back. And they can't. ... You can't send me back, and you don't want me to live here.

The activist asks: ‘So what is the status, then, of the people who have the final rejection, and who cannot be sent back?’

Just sitting in the *mottak* [asylum centre] waiting for nothing. Because their cases are closed. They’re just sitting there. They talk about democracy and human rights, but there are no human rights.

Rather than remaining in the asylum centres awaiting the next move from the authorities, the migrants decided to become visible in the public sphere, hoping for a ‘normalized’ future. Basher, here talking on behalf of the Palestinian migrants, emphasizes their mobilization as a contrast to the more passive waiting typical of other asylum seekers; while the latter are ‘waiting for nothing’ and are ‘just sitting there’, the Palestinians decided to shift to a linear, goal-directed temporal regime enabling them to contribute to change. By setting up the camp, they established an active relationship to their own lives and notions of the future, thereby turning the passive time of waiting into a time of project-oriented activity. The tented camp could thus be seen as a materialization of the way in which futurity is expressed, with an established life in Norway as the ultimate goal. It expresses hope, and what you hope for is that which you cannot be certain of; it is a future at once utopian and possible. Hope is the energy enabling people stuck in quicksand to hoist themselves up by the bootstraps.

Hope and liquid time

The ability to hope, says Hage (2003), enables people to invest and act upon a social reality, even when the chance of achieving your goals is slim and fear is a constant companion. Bourdieu, likewise, has argued that hope can be understood as an emotion enabling agency for ‘people without a future’ (Bourdieu 2000: 221). Ernst Bloch, in his monumental study of hope, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (1986 [1954]), regards hope as a basic quality of what it means to be human. Comparing Christian and Marxist expressions of hope, Bloch argues, against orthodox Freudianism, in favour of bringing to the surface the ‘not yet conscious’. His view, which seemed credible to many in the mid-twentieth century, was that Marxism represented the fullest, most consistent and realistic vision of hope. Inspired by Bloch, but updating him to engage fully with the fragmented, postmodern, neoliberal, globalized world of the early twenty-first century, Appadurai (2013) sees utopian hope now not in the grand visions of a historical teleology such as Marxism, but in the small-scale mobilizations

of social movements, largely in the Global South, and their transnational ties. The hope expressed in the tented camp is consistent with Appadurai's analysis: the residents of the camp have no ambition to change the world, or the course of history, but by speaking truth to power, they believe in the betterment of their own lives through contributing to a juster and more equitable politics from the Norwegian state. By doing so, we may well argue with Benjamin and other utopian socialists, they nevertheless fight for a kind of justice that may, if turned into a principle, contribute to greater fairness in general.

During the early demonstration at Eidsvolds Plass, journalists and curious passers-by approached. While Bendixsen was standing there, a student asked Basher what it was like to live in an asylum centre. Basher eventually explained the implications of having your application rejected:

And the other choice they [migrants] maybe have in their minds is [to be transferred to a] deportation camp, which is worse, and this is like our biggest fear. Because deportation camp is worse than *mottak* [asylum centre], because it's just deportation.⁵ ... But the idea is not about the place itself, it's not about having food and nice things and TV or luxury. It's not about this, it's about the situation: 'Till when I have to stay in this camp? Till which date?' And as a Palestinian who cannot be deported by force – in most cases cannot be deported at all? You have to stay ... you don't have a deadline, you know, so you can stay for years and years. That's our biggest fear, that they send us to the deportation centres, that we will stay for a long, long time. There is no end to this, and they know it, they know it very well. And this is what makes it more frustrating for us.

An important implication of waiting is the control by others over one's own life. Certain places where asylum seekers were being detained were described as places where the waiting had no deadline. Waiting for a long time 'is to be the subject of an assertion that one's own time (and therefore, one's social worth) is less valuable than the time and worth of the one who imposes the wait' (Schwartz 1975: 856). As shown in the perhaps most significant literary work about waiting, power and uncertainty, namely Kafka's *The Process*, the punitive aspect of waiting consists of ensuring that the person who waits is kept in the dark regarding both the length and the outcome of the wait.

In Basher's view, the authorities do not understand the psychologically denigrating effects of indeterminate waiting – what we call liquid time – in asylum centres, by exclusively focusing on material conditions. The uncertainty about the length and outcome of the waiting instilled fear in Basher, which was directly related to a possible, undesired future, namely deportation following a long period of waiting, that would then appear as futile and

meaningless. To some, this fear may be debilitating and paralysing (Boehm 2009), while in Basher and other Palestinian migrants, it inspired agency in an attempt to replace waiting characterized by inertia with waiting that was filled with hope.⁶

Although life in the tented camp could be uneventful and boring, its temporality had a different quality to that of the asylum centre. There were days when the residents whiled the time away playing cards, drinking tea, loitering on the church steps or drifting aimlessly in the streets, representing a temporal regime seen as meaningless not only from the perspective of greater society, but also from the refugees' point of view since these non-directional activities showed that life was at a standstill. The political engagement, too, was not always at the forefront, and events at home (in Palestine) were gossiped about, family ties were maintained, and the young men might mourn a death of a relative or the end of a love relationship. Yet the tedium of the camp was, unlike that of the asylum centre, a result of a combination of undirected time where work or education was not possible, and an unrealized wish that future plans should materialize. Their visibility in Norwegian society and proximity to the everyday lives of others, who passed by just a few metres away, held out the possibility that something wonderful might happen at any moment, and that their lives were part of a larger narrative about politics, humanity and justice. In this, the migrants' determination to shift from a liquid temporality of monotonous repetition to one of hope was consistent not only with Appadurai's analysis of grassroots mobilization, but as will be shown, also with Bloch's loftier utopian thought.

This also shows an important cultural dimension to the waiting taking place in the camp, and the lives of the Palestinians in the tented camp express a stark *clash of temporalities*. Protestant Norway is a society where the vast majority of the adult population engages in waged work, regardless of gender, and where waged work and morality are deeply connected (Rugkåsa 2012). The first question a Norwegian asks when s/he meets a new person at a festive occasion is, 'So, and what do you do?' Oil-rich Norway is an accelerated society whose citizens walk faster, talk faster and consume more efficiently than their parents or grandparents did (Eriksen 2015; cf. Rosa 2015). The potentially harmful effects of instantaneous, ubiquitous mobile communication technology are recurrent topics of discussion from the lunch room to the media. In this society, courses in 'mindfulness' and the like have become popular in recent years (Madsen 2013), as a way of voluntarily enforcing slowness and self-awareness in a cultural world where slow time has become a scarce resource. Yet, we should recall, the slow

time associated with *la durée* has value and a cumulative, liberating potential only when it is chosen, which in the case of irregular migrants it is not. The contrast between the inactivity of waiting imposed on the temporary residents of the camp and the surrounding goal-directed, fast and efficient mainstream society was stark, arguably starker than it would have been had the camp been established in a Middle Eastern country instead.

The present as a fragile hinge between past and future

The transition from indeterminate, empty waiting time to focused, activity-driven waiting time presupposed a range of activities, such as organizing a music festival, inviting politicians to the camp and interviews with the media. We have described the demonstrations, the contact with Norwegian NGOs and free-ranging activists (such as the 'Blitzers'), and the help received from Palestinians with resident rights; and we have also mentioned that visitors were welcomed and often encouraged to drop by the camp. A major event in the effort to shift from passive to active waiting, as in 'stalking a prey' (that is, the coveted documents from the government), was a musical festival organized just after the summer of 2011. Not exactly a summer of love, 2011 was the year in which Norway suffered a shocking massacre at the hands of a right-wing terrorist; and the autumn signalled, as it happened only fleetingly, a need for a more inclusive, cosmopolitan attitude towards minorities and diversity.

The rationale behind the event was partly to raise money for subsistence, but also to attract the attention of the media and the Norwegian population. Familiar Norwegian musicians played for free at the festival, where documentaries from Palestine (*Promises, Checkpoint*) were also broadcast in one of the party tents where a handful of migrants usually slept. There was also a small photo exhibition featuring historical photos from the early twentieth century, from the time of the 1948 Nakba ('the catastrophe') of eviction and subsequent Israeli occupation, of Palestinian refugee camps and on to the Palestinian camp in Oslo, entitled for the occasion 'the first Palestine refugee camp in Europe and outside the Middle East'. The photos were arranged chronologically, giving the present predicament historical depth and context.

The entrance ticket was a laminated copy of a Palestinian passport. A Land Rover was made to appear as an Israeli military vehicle, parked at the entrance and equipped with a sign saying 'Stop! Checkpoint!'. Two of the migrants

played the part of Israeli soldiers, checking the entrance tickets (or ‘passes’) and performed body searches similar to the routine at Israeli checkpoints. There were T-shirts, postcards and other merchandise for sale, and before the music began, a debate was organized with participation by Norwegian politicians and Palestinian refugees.

The narrative about the sufferings of the Palestinian people was a major, recurrent theme throughout the festival. By connecting the refugee situation in the West Bank with the present camp in Oslo, the organizers appealed to the historically strong Norwegian engagement, particularly on the left side of the political spectrum, with Palestine. One of the effects of this time-space compression (Harvey 1990) linking Palestine in 1948 with Norway in 2011 was to raise critical questions about Norway’s policy towards foreigners, whether outside the country (foreign policy) or within it (immigration policy). Norway’s consistent and continued support of Israel was not mentioned explicitly, but tacitly acknowledged in this juxtaposition. The chronology of camps, beginning in the Middle East in the mid-twentieth century, ending in Northern Europe in the early twenty-first, also expressed a possible future where the provisional camp in Oslo represented the beginning of a mushrooming of Palestinian camps on European territory.

The emphasis on suffering and refugee camps expresses a collective self-understanding centred on victimhood. While the activities around the tented camp sought to establish a temporality of hope and future autonomy, one possible interpretation of the exhibition at the festival is, accordingly, that although the struggle continues on a small scale (in Oslo) and a large scale (in Palestine/Israel), so will waiting and suffering. For a long time, a large, old, rusty key hung on the wall of a ‘Palestinian embassy’ in the camp. Residents pointed out that ‘all’ Palestinians had such a key, and it is indeed common to see people on the West Bank with a key in a chain around their neck, like an item of jewellery. The key signifies loss and nostalgia for the homes, both physical and metaphorical ones, that were lost after the Nakba. Some even carry the original keys to the homes they had to abandon in 1948, explaining that they, or their parents or grandparents, had locked their houses then, hoping one day to return and open the door. To Palestinians, the key has become a symbol of their ongoing exile, expressing the right to return and defiance in the face of continued occupation. As pointed out by George Bisharat (1997), the relationship to place among contemporary Palestinians in exile is ‘more self-conscious [than before] ... and an attempt to reconcretize a connection to the land that had been violently sundered’ (Bisharat 1997: 217).

The key can be regarded as – metaphorically this time – a key symbol (Ortner 1973) transcending the boundaries of time and space, and signifying not only exile in Palestine, but exile in Norway and the right to a home, whether it is located in Jaffa or Trondheim. The photo exhibition, the key, the staging of border controls, the fake passes and the Land Rover were meant to give the Palestinians legitimacy as authentic asylum seekers, as members of a people condemned to perennial exile, almost like the Jews after the sacking of the Second Temple. Their parents' and grandparents' status as refugees has virtually been inherited. On a Facebook page devoted to the tented camp, a young man wrote the following poem:

MOHAMMED: Without Bathroom
 Without water
 Without electricity
 Without a wall or roof
 Without floor
 Live like our grandparents in 48
 But this time in Norway

These very explicit references confirm and strengthen a mythical temporality whereby the connection between the past, the present and the future is being reproduced in a particular configuration of time–space compression. The Palestinians, moreover, draw on this continuous narrative of displacement and exile in order to justify their protests against rejections of asylum applications. The temporality expressed, with a seamless continuity between past and present, suggests that since they have been badly treated by Israel, the Norwegian Government is in effect an accomplice of Israel if it refuses them asylum. At the same time, the photographs, the key, the poems, the slogans and the tented camp itself can be understood as strategic tools materializing and producing concepts of the future in the present. Identity is never 'nothing but' strategic or meaningful; it is always both.

Another conceptualization of the future that was projected in the camp was that of a free Palestine. The demonstration slogans they used in Oslo switched between two temporalities; between a large-scale, long-term vision for an independent Palestine, depicting the Palestinians as a nation-in-waiting, and the small-scale, short-term demands on behalf of migrants waiting for legal documents enabling them to stay in Norway. However, against the Blitzers' occasional emphasis on the struggle for a free Palestine, the local Palestinian *sans-papiers* responded that 'We are here, not in Palestine!' To them, a free

Palestine was envisioned as a utopian goal, much further ahead and more difficult to achieve than refugee status in Norway. It was precisely because a free Palestine seemed so utopian and unrealistic for the time being that they demanded recognition as bona fide refugees in Norway.

Waiting as a tear in the temporal fabric

While the myths of origin in the tented camps generated an idea of a continuous liminality from 1948 until today, depicting the Palestinians as a 'people in waiting', their everyday life and ongoing relationship with family members in Palestine created a different kind of liminality, on a smaller scale. Liminality, a temporal concept cunningly merging individual transformation and social continuity in its initial usage, was originally used to make sense of rites of passage (van Gennep 1909; see also Turner 1967). The term refers to the undefined period connecting two clearly defined statuses or social positions. The trials and tribulations to which young people are subjected at initiation in a vast range of societies, whereby they are stripped of previous identities and subsequently reincorporated as a new kind of person, may be likened to the state of liminality experienced by migrant asylum seekers who find themselves in a limbo, a liminal phase between their settledness in the country of origin and their legal inclusion into the country of destination (Khosravi 2010), the main difference being that the latter form of liminality has no predefined outcome.

The indefiniteness of liminality also indicates why the present is not experienced as meaningful, at the same time as it is indeterminate and potentially eternal. When hope cannot be fixed to a definite future moment (e.g. your marriage, your initiation, your final exam etc.), the present liminal state seems to continue forever without turning into a future. Life is on hold. Liminality eats itself backwards and forwards in the subjectively experienced time of *la durée*, and the present becomes ever more pressing as time passing. The present intensifies, like waiting at a bus stop for a bus that never arrives.

Such an experience of liminality was made apparent in many of the conversations we had with migrants. We asked Ahmed if he is in contact with friends outside of Norway:

My chat is always offline because all my friends [outside Norway] are doing very good, but I'm nothing. My life stopped since two years, my life is nothing. What should I write to them?

Ahmed explains that he also has reduced his frequency of contact with his family, although he phones his mother regularly.

If not, then she worries. Every three week I call her – every one month. Not more than that, because I don't have any news. The first question was always 'have you got positive?' Now it is always: 'have you found wife? Have you married?' I'm the eldest, but all the others are married, all have children. She thinks too much about this. In Palestine you are 25 years max then married. Not 34 years! [His age.] In Palestine the family is the first – every Friday they eat, visit, go swimming. My mother tells me 'If you marry, I wouldn't think so much. She will cook, clean, have children.' But I'm not married. When I hear that, I don't call her – I want to give her good news.

Here, Ahmed identifies a crucial aspect of an irregular life situation, shared also by migrants from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Ethiopia/Eritrea in Bendixsen's ethnography on irregularity with both women and men, namely the lack of opportunity to start a family and thereby leave the liminal phase behind permanently. The desire to start a family was most frequently mentioned in connection with the expectations from family in the home country, who expected them to do so. Many irregular migrants would be loath to elaborate on the full extent of their precarity to their hopeful family members at home, and are therefore often met with incredulity at the extent to which they are unable to send remittances or start a family life.

The significance of the liminal phase is gendered. To some of the women we spoke with, lengthy irregularity entails that they consider having children in spite of their unstable situation, since it will one day be too late to do so. To the male, unmarried migrants, the main pressure came from without, through pressure from relatives to leave their liminality, grow up and prove themselves to be men rather than boys. The state of liminality made cumulative projects involving development and growth impossible. Socially speaking, they are standing still, or they live in an eternally timeless, liquid present, and this is being confirmed whenever they meet people whose lives move ahead, such as the Norwegians involved with the camp.

Prolonged liminality, timeless time between fixed positions, is a threat to the cumulative, linear projects of economic independence and raising a family, and – in the case of women – to their ability to show themselves worthy by having children. It is therefore not without a certain interest that liminality is hailed as a superior mode of existence in mainstream neoliberal information society. The cult of youth witnessed in advertising and popular culture suggests that the

ideal state of being is as a 19 year old. Being flexible and willing to change is widely considered a positive quality in the labour market, and jobs are often defined in terms of projects rather than stable content (Sennett 1998; Eriksen 2005). Stability, in this age of flux, movement, hybridization and change, is an indication of stasis and stagnation.

The difference between the two kinds of liminality is evident, but needs some further unpacking. (i) The irregular migrants are not net contributors to GDP. They are inefficient consumers and non-producers in the formal economy. The eternal youths of the information society, by contrast, remain highly efficient consumers throughout their lives, since fast and efficient consumption can compensate for the lack of a strong personal identity. (ii) Another important difference concerns the rhythm of a liminal existence. If that of the irregular migrants can be described as a life in slow motion, fully committed participants in the information economy lead lives that stand still at a hundred kilometres an hour (Eriksen 2001; see also Hassan and Purser 2007). (iii) Mainstream, card-carrying members of the information society, moreover, are marinated in individualism and the gospel of the freedom of choice, while the asylum seekers across from St James Church have strong family commitments and are embedded in a set of cultural values with certain scripts for the achievement of manhood and womanhood that may somewhat alter depending on your class, but in general where your obligations towards others weigh more heavily than your freedom. (iv) Finally, degrees of autonomy distinguishes the two categories in obvious, but no less important ways. Stressed citizens of the information society could choose slowness, and some do (Honoré 2004), while irregulars cannot choose either speed or engaging in projects entailing cumulative growth and development. They are trapped in a state of unwanted liminality, where time does not move anything forward except their irrepressible biological aging.

The tented camp was eventually demolished, after months of political pressure, in autumn 2012. By now, it had become abundantly clear that hopes for permits of residence were seriously weakened, if not evaporated. Some of the residents moved on to Sweden, a more liberal country than Norway in matters of immigration; some moved in with friends and got by economically in the informal sector; and one individual eventually got his legal permit of residence. Several of the central figures in the Palestinian group expressed disappointment, stating that they had wasted a lot of time trying to appeal to the Norwegian authorities. One of them, Ali, expressed a widely shared sentiment:

Something good came out about it [the tent camp]. But I did not make anything for two years! If I had not been here in Oslo, I would be in a different country. When I came here, I didn't know how quickly time goes – all the time new meetings with the government, parliament. We think the problems will finish soon, because we have access to these people – that people from the government talked to us [made them believe that their problems would be solved soon]. We dream, think, but then finish with nothing. It's very bad. We have very bad health, back problems, before not a problem, but now I feel that I'm 50 years old.

The fact that local and even national politicians came to the camp and heard the refugees out was both surprising and a source of hope for the young men, whose experience from their home country suggested that the distance between common people and politicians was usually far greater. Yet, in the end, nothing came out of these meetings, and the erstwhile residents of the camp might feel older, perhaps somewhat wiser, but not satisfied that they had contributed to a worthwhile cause. By stating that they had wasted their time by pursuing political mobilization that was partly an appeal to the Norwegian authorities, they also criticize state policies, procedures and practices that structured their lives (cf. Rotter 2016). Rejected migrants who accepted voluntary return with the International Organization for Migrants (IOM) often commented that they wished that they 'hadn't spent so much time' before returning (Øien and Bendixsen 2012). Others, who chose to stay in Europe in the hope that some country would accept their wish to start their life in earnest, argued that if they were to return now, the years as irregulars would feel like 'wasted time'. In this way, waiting does not just entail several stages, from the short to the long term. The period of waiting can also attain a new meaning retrospectively when the future, in this case the securing of legal residence permits, did not materialize after all, and became instead one of those possible futures that never happened. Changes in the opportunity structure, defined from outside rather than within, may close doors that were previously open, or close doors that long seemed to be ajar.

The hard work of recapturing time

We have shown how hope and indeterminacy alternate in liminal time when an asylum application has been rejected and the applicant appeals the decision. Hope entails that time is directed, linear and cumulative; indeterminacy suggests entrapment in a state of eternal limbo or liminality. The Palestinian mobilization can be seen as an endeavour aiming to reshape empty waiting

time to the directed, meaningful temporality of hope, and as an attempt to regain the power to shape one's own temporality. Conceptualizations of the future – whether undesired (enforced return), desired (permit of residence), utopian (free Palestine) or expected (start a family) – were sources of fear and hope, prompting action in the present in the expectation that they might shape the future. The mobilization and the establishment of the camp were attempts to recapture time, to help decide when waiting would end and the future would begin.

Waiting in hope and anticipation connects the past and future through the conviction that 'my waiting will result with the fulfilment of my wishes' (Bozic-Vrbancic 2009: 191), but the transformation from passive to active waiting that we have explored in this chapter is essential since it inserts agency into the sometimes exasperatingly sluggish flow of time entailed by waiting. In order to combat the seemingly eternal liminality experienced by refugees waiting for papers that never seem to come, people depend on hope, frequently mixed with fear, in order to act.

The axis liminal/passive versus goal-oriented/active must be understood within a broader typology of different forms of waiting. By filling waiting time with social time, waiting may seem productive and momentarily meaningful, but it may yet be perceived as useless and wasteful retrospectively if the objective of the waiting is never reached – the dentist never appears in the waiting room, the beloved fails to return your calls, the stone-faced ministry never sends you the official letter you need for your life as a card-carrying human being to begin. Filling the emptiness of waiting with political mobilization aimed to create a future as a person with a proven identity concerns the ways in which people structure their experience of lasting uncertainty, while simultaneously confirming the liminality and precarity of the migrants. Although this time is invested with meaning and cumulative projects towards a defined future, uncertainty continues to enter as a counterpoint, as a kind of antimatter, thereby continuing to confirm the temporariness and liminality of the migrants. They nevertheless succeed in limiting the power of others to make them wait by filling the empty time imposed by the authorities with content. Theirs are acts of defiance. Turning Foucault (1978) on his head, Abu-Lughod (1990) says that where there is resistance, there is power. We have shown that the acts of resistance invested in and around the tented camp next to St James Church of Culture did not merely, or even chiefly, concern the instrumental objective of obtaining political asylum. It was also, or perhaps chiefly, a rebellion against the wilful emptying of their time on the part of the authorities, an insistence to be

allowed agency even in a state of limbo where one's existence as a person was in doubt. A matter for further inquiry concerns the ways in which waiting time is an expression of someone's power over somebody else. The production of wasted time, or waiting time, among migrants is one of the ways in which the state expresses its power. By rebelling against this imposed passivity and clientification, whether effectively or not, the refugees not only give anthropologists of time grist for their mill, or seek to improve their personal lives. They also challenge a political order where temporal autonomy is unequally distributed.

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Notes

- 1 UDI, Utlendingsdirektoratet, is the Norwegian Directorate for Immigration.
- 2 UNE, Utlendingsnemda, 'the Foreigners' Tribunal', handles appeals against rejected applications for immigration to Norway.
- 3 There is some empirical overlap between this chapter and an article in Norwegian (Bendixsen 2015b).
- 4 Whyte (2011) describes how the asylum system in Denmark works as a technology of power. Asylum seekers' waiting time was structured by uncertainty, which, he argues, was part of the operation of the system.
- 5 The uncertainty, fear and indeterminacy of life in a deportation centre is described by Marie Amelie in her second book (Amelie 2014), which is based on her personal experiences at Trandum deportation centre after having been arrested following the publication of, and widespread acclaim for, her first book about being 'illegally Norwegian' (Amelie 2010).
- 6 Research indicates that irregular migrants apply for assisted return (AR) when they have lost all hope that they will achieve a residence permit in the country where they have applied for asylum (Bendixsen and Lidén 2017). The decision to stop waiting and instead return, however, is not only tied to the period of time spent waiting, but also to experiences of not being able to meet family obligations, personal or structural changes in the situation in the country of return (such as family death or security improved), or being unable to meet social expectations, such as marriage and work (Bendixsen and Lidén 2017).

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Waiting for God in Ghana: The Chronotopes of a Prayer Mountain

Bruno Reinhardt

In *Waiting for God*, Simone Weil (1996) argues that the ‘attitude that brings about salvation is not like any form of activity’ (196). It is ‘the waiting or attentive and faithful immobility that lasts indefinitely and cannot be shaken’ (1996: 196). She compares this particular state of vulnerability to the figure of the slave ‘who waits near the door so as to open immediately the master knocks’ (1996: 196). Weil’s phenomenology of waiting is based upon a qualitative divide between what she calls morality, which ‘only depends on the will in what is, so to speak, its most muscular aspect’, and, religion, whose foundation is ‘attention animated by desire’ (197), a ‘desire that saves’ (195). The concept of waiting provides Weil with a specific entry point into the problem of wilful submission, a core component of so-called religious salvation, which is likely to overflow the secular modern equation of agency with free choice or autonomous self-fashioning (Asad 1993, 2003). Weil’s response to Augustine’s famous warning – ‘Hands off yourself. Try to build up yourself, and you build a ruin’ (in Brown 1972: 30) – is waiting attentively for God, since ‘it is for Him to search for us’ (Weil 1996: 216).

Weil’s theology has a strong quietist flavour, which is alien to the type of Christianity (Pentecostal-Charismatic) and the context (contemporary Ghana) I will be dealing with here. Nevertheless, I would like to retain from her the keen awareness that waiting is not solely a negative category of action: an inability or incapacity to act. It can be an ethically and spiritually loaded disposition, which she associates with the Greek *hupomoné*, used in the New Testament with the sense of eschatological steadfastness, but not so much to the Latin *patientia* and its stoic sense of waiting unaffectedly (Weil 1996: 76). Christian *hupomoné* is cognate with the pregnant sense of anticipation defined by Paul, the apostle, as faith (*pistis*): ‘confidence in what we hope for, assurance about we do not see’ (Hebrews 11. 1).

The waiting of faith is a Self-projection into a desired future, whose actualization, albeit entirely dependent upon an Other's will, is still the normative horizon from which the Christian subject should think, feel and act upon the present. It is not stationary but a complex pattern of affective and ethical motion, paradoxically self-fulfilling in its very non-fulfilment. The waiting of faith is also full of pitfalls and trials, so it must be cultivated. This is reflected in my interlocutors' ambivalent engagement with this force, which they consider a grace, a sovereign gift 'planted' by God in their hearts, but also a skill, something that 'grows' and 'matures', hence which must be learned in and as a practice, like the waiting of a hunter or a fisher. For charismatic Christians, prayer is the most important tool and catalyser of faith (Reinhardt 2017).¹

As an inchoate mix of grace and growth, event and process, right now and not yet, faith enters the everyday and becomes entangled with all sorts of other waitings, moral and material expectations about a good and a better life in the near and mid-range futures. Indeed, the dynamic history of Christianity in modern Africa is the history of a series of juxtapositions – as criticism, autonomous cohabitation or full 'concubinage' (Mbembe 1988: 32) – between religious redemption and hegemonic secular *teli* plagued by contradictions, such as colonial 'civilization' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1991), nationalist 'sovereignty' (Hastings 1982) and neoliberal 'development' (Freeman 2012). Having grown and differentiated amidst these alternative temporalities, Christianity today represents not a stable object, but something akin to what David Scott calls a 'problem-space', 'an ensemble of questions and answers around which a horizon of identifiable stakes (conceptual as well as ideological-political stakes) hangs' (Scott 2004: 4). As such, the boundaries separating it from politics, the state, the economy and the popular culture are inherently volatile, giving rise to multiple configurations. To be a Christian is in many ways to debate and to define these boundaries. This is certainly not an African specificity (Garriot and O'Neill 2008), but it finds specific pressures in a historical setting in which Christian and modern projects of 'breaking with the past' (Scott 1999: 26) have arrived and advanced adjacently.

David Scott's work has been equally concerned with another aspect of post-colonial temporalities: a generalized fatigue of secular teleologies and hopes. He contrasts the Romantic anti-colonial historical consciousness with its Tragic post-colonial version while noticing that 'the whole teleological historicity of transition from the evils of colonialism to the promised virtues of the sovereign nation-state it embodies may be not so much mistaken or wrong as exhausted, played out, in the sense that it no longer offers much critical energy for refiguring

the renewal of futurities' (2014a: 806). Anthropologists of Africa have similarly noticed how the dusk of nationalist utopias in the continent since the end of the Cold War (regardless of how cynical they may have been) has implied the closure of past futures and engendered anxieties about what is to come (Piot 2010). The result is, again, not homogenous. According to Mbembe, 'as an age, the post-colony encloses multiple *durées* made up of discontinuities, reversals, inertias, and swings that overlay one another, interpenetrate one another, and envelope one another: an entanglement' (2001: 14).

One of the phenomena contributing to such dazzling temporal multiplication, fruit of the nation-state and the market's inability to over-codify and governmentalize time and hope has been the growth of transnational religious imaginaries and networks related to Islam and Pentecostal-charismatic Christianity (Larkin and Meyer 2006). Although charismatic practices, narratives and institutions resonate in various ways with the neoliberal epoch – including a focus on mediatization, entrepreneurship, success and the sacralization of consumption via 'prosperity theology' (Meyer 2007) – they are not simply passive reflections of or responses to this secular *Zeitgeist*. I rather take Pentecostal spirituality as a particular, albeit heterogeneous, modality of dwelling in the post-colony's 'time on the move' (Mbembe 2001: 1–23).

Having this in mind, my intention in this chapter is not to represent the phenomenon of Christian waiting in contemporary Ghana through a well-defined 'ethnography of historicity' (Hirsch and Stewart 2005). This perspective would assume that there is a coherent 'local knowledge' to be empirically found and systematically reconstituted. I find such a method unwarranted when applied to this context and to a religious movement whose charismatic component, capillarity and lack of institutional control makes it look like a temporal kaleidoscope. Since kaleidoscopes are not to be objectified in stasis, but to be traced in their various configurations, my intention in this chapter is to capture ethnographically some of these by revisiting my journey to a Ghanaian prayer mountain: Atwea.

Atwea Mountain is located at the Ashanti region of Ghana, and became a place of pilgrimage in 1963, when the Methodist reverend Abraham Osei-Asibey was led to it through a series of personal revelations. He eventually founded the *Kristo Mu Anigye Kuo*, Happiness in Christ Fellowship, a charismatic prayer group that met at the mountain's top periodically (Asamoah-Gyadu 2007: 72), claiming Atwea as a Christian territory. After the Pentecostal-charismatic revival coursed through the country in the late 1980s (Gifford 2004; Asamoah-Gyadu 2005), Atwea became a widely known site of pilgrimage, attracting charismatic

Christians from multiple denominations all across Ghana. Although the number of prayer camps at the mountain's top have increased along this period, the shared aim of visitors continues to be the same: in their own words, 'to wait for the Lord' (*twen Awurade*) through fasting and prayers.

Following Hage's (2009) suggestion that waiting is both a phenomenon with a vast array of actualizations and a perspective that can shed new light on social life, I would like to ask: what is to 'wait for the Lord'? And what are the kinds of ethnographic cues it provides to understand the broader relation between charismatic Christianity and the post-colony as temporal regimes?

Prayer, waiting, crisis: introductory remarks

Prayer is a privileged window into the temporal complexities of faith, as it incorporates efficacy and deferral. According to Marcel Mauss (2003), prayer is 'an effort, an expenditure of physical and moral energy in order to produce certain results' (54). It is predicated upon ritual technicalities, affective dispositions, conceptions of man and divinity, and is deemed effective by practitioners at various levels. But Mauss also highlights how prayer requires some degree of contingency in order to be defined as such, otherwise decaying into mechanical 'incantation'. Contingency in prayer indexes the transcendental nature of its addresser, and Mauss recognizes the difference between prayer and incantation, religion and magic, even beyond the Abrahamic traditions. He argues that native Australians *besech* to their high God Atnatu through prayers whose finality is to 'evoke rather than invoke' (79). Conversely, they *conjure* lesser gods through incantations, expecting them to come 'as a dog comes at the sound of his master's voice' (77). Mauss adds that the difference between prayer and incantation – 'may your will be done' and 'may my will be done' – is not clear-cut. 'There are all sort of degrees between incantations and prayer' (55), so this distinction should be taken as pragmatic, the most basic condition for prayer to continue to be prayer being waiting, a temporal lag and a volitional leeway propitious for the flourishing of hope and doubt.

The temporality of prayer is not singular though. It is homologous to that of another phenomenon that famously drew Mauss's attention: the gift (Mauss 1967). Although not transcendence-oriented, at least in a conventional theological sense, the gift, like prayer, is a relational, future-making act permanently threatened by the possibility of vanishing. A gift given might become just pure expenditure, when it fails to attract the other into a cycle of reciprocity. Or it can

become barter, when the receiver asphyxiates reciprocity through a quick return. Both prayer and the gift are subjected to an equally open-ended temporality, which is paradoxically at the basis of their great capacity to enliven past futures and gestate new ones (Derrida 1992; Miyazaki 2004; Minnegal 2009).

Mauss himself addressed directly the broader social productivity of waiting a few years later, during a comment to a conference delivered by François Simiand. Corroborating Hage's point that waiting is 'almost synonymous to social being' (2009: 1), Mauss (1969) argues:

We are among each other, in society, in order to wait for each other for such and such results; that is the essential form of community. Expressions such as 'constraint', 'force', 'authority', we could utilize in other manners, and they have their value, but the idea of a collective waiting [*l'attente collective*] is in my view one of the most fundamental notions we could explore. I don't know any better generative category of law and economy: '*Je m'attends*' ('I expect that/wait for'); that's the very definition of any action of a collective nature. It is also in the origin of theology: 'God will hear – I do not say fulfil – my prayer' (118).

By defining waiting as a *notion génératrice*, Mauss is gently recasting the problem of temporality in the French school, articulating more systemically observations already made in *On Prayer* (1909) and *The Gift* (1925). In the latter, Mauss had been explicit about the need of rethinking social totalities 'in motion, as an engineer sees masses and systems, or as we observe octopuses and anemones in the sea' (1967: 78). Social facts are tackled no longer *as stationary things*, à la Durkheim's method, but mostly *through the motion of things*. Time is the substance of sociality, 'society' itself being a gathering of prospective temporalities, a temporal economy (Munn 1992). In consonance, time appears in the passage above not solely as a 'collective representation', reproduced in culturally specific ways through the externalist authority of society. Norms and practices are not separated as the ideal society is to the real society, the sacred to the profane. They participate in one another as the community to come participates in the community as it is. To live socially is to wait for its fulfilment, which is also *to believe* in it, not in the cognitive sense of mentally assenting to a set of propositions (Asad 1993), but in the volitional-economic sense of giving credit (*credere*) to a promise.

We may say that dwelling faithfully in the gap between deferral and fulfilment is the phenomenological kernel unifying prayer, currency, law or any other domains of social life, a fact that, according to Miyazaki (2004), often evades the reach of social theory, which operates mostly retrospectively, stabilizing past assemblages as the rule. Such an analytical move becomes especially hard to

perform during situations of crisis. Speaking in a moment of economic recession and currency fluctuation, Mauss argues: 'How to best characterize the state of panic in which we are living (one that can be read as an economical phenomena, but also as something else ...) if not as a suppression of expectations/waitings (*surpression des attentes*)?' (1969: 118). The volatility of value during times of crisis is matched by the volatility of knowledge about what is a context, displaying for all to see the holistic and fragile temporal infrastructure of societies as forms of collective waiting.

Crisis and prayer also relate to each other adjacently. Economic crises, like moral breakdowns (Zigon 2007), can make one reinvest one's trust in God even more intensely, to seek consistency by looking further beyond, when short and mid-range futurities collapse as reliable foci of moral and physical investment. But it can also slowly cripple one's faith through over-excitation, generating impatient expectations about miracles that threaten to reduce prayers to incantations. Charismatic prayer in Ghana involves both these possibilities, eventually in oscillation or overlapping.

Mbembe and Roitman (1995) define the post-colonial African subject as 'the subject of crisis', struggling to thrive in a context in which crisis is no longer the name of an event, but itself a lifelong temporal horizon and a 'self-referring chain' (325). Oppositions between order and anomie become blatantly inappropriate in a setting in which fluctuation is the rule and legitimacy is continuously produced and contested: 'There is hardly a reality without its double' (340). While 1990s Cameroon has important differences compared to contemporary Ghana that I cannot elaborate here, their diagnostic is still applicable to large sectors of Ghana's population reckoning with the neoliberal 'hops' of capital (Ferguson 2006: 25–48) through economic informality, hence, the lack of a monthly salary and its capacity to secure a relatively planned futurity to invest in.

One can hardly ignore that such an ongoing state of 'crisis of expectations' has contributed to the impressive growth of charismatic Christianity in Ghana since structural adjustment reforms. But the same factors facilitating religious proselytism and growth have put acute pressures upon the born-again project of coherent religious flourishing. However complex and multifarious, the link between precarity and faith has been often reduced to simple causality by the scholarship. According to Gifford (2004), for instance, charismatic churches expanded in Ghana simply 'because they claim to have the answer to Ghanaians' ... most pressing existential problem, economic survival' (2004: ix). Fabian provides a similar, albeit more existentially complex, representation when he argues that, for charismatics in Congo,

'prayer seems to "work" by turning despair into ecstasy' (114). Whereas Gifford underlines how frustrations with development have engendered an impatient faith, in which the temporality of salvation has been entirely engulfed by magical prayers enacted by dubious men of God, Fabian sees the self-referential dimension of glossolalia, a practice with intense physical and moral investments, but without semantic content, as epitomizing the 'Spirit of despair', a compulsive attempt to domesticate an untameable time, like a Sisyphus laboriously involved into an aimless pursuit.

Such bleak views are not consensual, and it has also been common to interpret the charismatic revival as reflecting the various processes of redemocratization happening in Africa since the 1990s. Piot (2010) describes the charismatic churches of Togo as 'horizontal and networked', offering 'hope and possibility, a phoenix rising from the ashes of afro-pessimism' (75). He depicts converts not as naive preys of miracle makers or compulsive ritualists, but as autonomous citizens of Christ, who 'walk with their heads held high, proudly refusing the colonial/postcolonial lot they have been dealt. They lead lives of purpose and discipline, and find pleasure in worship. Moreover, the initiative comes not from without or above, but seems entirely theirs' (76).

My intention is not to provide an all-encompassing view of what Ghanaian charismatics are, hence neither to corroborate nor to fully reject any of these views. I just want to underline that the 'African subject of crisis' envisioned by Mbembe and Roitman is not an abject 'suffering slot' (Robbins 2013). It is a *subject of emergency* in a double sense. It faces the threat of emptiness and the downfall of normative boundaries through nostalgia, melancholia, boredom (Main 2007), prolonged 'waithood' (Honwana 2012) or magical impatience. But it is also an emergent life form, characterized by creative entrepreneurship, the 'routinization of a register of improvisations' (Mbembe and Roitman 1995: 326), and various forms of securing futurities. The same plurality can be found within the Pentecostal movement.

Before I tackle this issue through observations made in Atwea Mountain, I lend more concrete overtones to the figure of the popular charismatic subject in Ghana by focusing on the life of a street evangelist, who was my travel companion to the prayer mountain. Richard's lifestyle is in many ways exemplary of the complex ways whereby the waitings of faith and of post-colonial modernity intersect in the everyday of popular believers in Ghana, including the specific pressures these temporal symbioses impose on social theory, which may help us to understand why a single phenomenon can be open to such disparate judgements.

On our way to the prayer mountain: the temporalities of an end-times evangelist

I first heard about Atwea Mountain from my friend Richard Agyeman, a popular street preacher whom I met during my fieldwork in Accra. Knowledgeable about my interest in pastoral training, Richard suggested I should visit Atwea, which he characterized as a 'Bible school for the poor', where one needs no money or contacts to join. During one of the breaks from my main research, in February 2011, I followed his advice and invited him to come along, which he gladly accepted.

Like most individuals reckoning with economic informality, Richard lives day by day. But his tools of survival are also specifically Christian. He is a man of God wandering in the desert of the post-colony, who has been divinely appointed to be an evangelist and spread the Gospel. Richard recognizes his conversion as a moment of divine persuasion mediated by human vessels, which gave him the opportunity to 'claim' a number of promises charismatics deem biblically sound, such as being filled with the Holy Spirit and to cultivate a personal relationship with God through dreams, visions, voices, and spiritual gifts like glossolalia, healing, deliverance from demons, and prophecy.

Some of Richard's gifts are as mundane as any skill, such as his compelling oratory, impressive biblical memory, and ability to speak and read fluently in Akan and English, despite his reduced formal education. Of course, these capacities were learned and honed through dedication, emulation and mentorship, but, according to him, practices and relations simply 'sharpened' what God had already given him since conversion. Richard testifies to the divine nature of his calling by evoking both quotidian signs, such as feelings of boldness and unique satisfaction while speaking publicly about Christ (which he attributes to the Holy Spirit) and more eventful revelations. He was particularly moved by a dream in which he saw himself in a dark setting, walking and leading people with a torchlight, the light of salvation. At some point, they stopped and he distributed pieces of sugar cane to his followers, which symbolized the sweetness and joy of the Word of God.

Richard's everyday life is suffused by the miraculous, which 'denotes less a break with the ordinary than an intensification or remaking of it; it is an act, an instance not of exception but of inception' (Goldstone 2014: 109). As such, his gifts-skills become naturally enmeshed with the question of subsistence. By taking the streets of Accra as his parish, Richard receives monetary offerings, mostly coins. He uses these to buy food, clothes and to invest in his Christianity,

especially through devotional books. Richard is 'a giver', so he periodically reconverts his meagre earnings into dutiful church offerings. Eventually, he gathers bigger donations to use as 'seed money', what charismatics call faithful acts of sacrificial expenditure while expecting material 'breakthroughs'. Richard's evangelistic activities have also allowed him to weave more enduring Christian networks with other ministers and with the men and women he has 'blessed' with salvation. He 'follows up' on converts, that is, pays them regular visits at home, using this time to mentor them more thoroughly into the Christian life through Bible readings, counselling and prayers. Christian networking has provided Richard with a safety net, as these people would not let a friend, mentor or peer they consider 'a good man of God' go without food or a place to sleep. During the year we met, Richard was sleeping at the church of one of his contacts, in the neighbourhood of La Paz.

Although Richard's basic needs tend to be attended by the fruits of his calling, he eventually goes through material trials. He faces these moments with *emergency strategies*, such as reducing the number of daily meals to one, preferably 'heavy food', like *fufu*, a traditional dough made of cassava and plantain that sits in the stomach for a longer time. He also embraces *emergent strategies*, such as converting deprivation into acts of faith, as illustrated by one of his life mottos: 'When I have food, I eat. When I don't, I fast and pray', that is, 'wait for the Lord'. Although it would be easy to identify Richard's lifestyle with the 'survivalist orientation' (Simone 2004: 9) that afflicts large sections of contemporary African societies, his everyday regimes of improvisation include a concern with coherence, with what MacIntyre (1984) calls 'the unity of a human life', 'a life that can be conceived and evaluated as a whole' (205). To trivialize this by reducing his poverty to a mere cause driving his evangelistic activities would entail missing all meaningful components of his life.

Richard is not a poor person who happens to be a Christian. He lives precarity *as a Christian*, turning bare deprivation into fertile Christian vulnerability, hunger into fasting, through specific forms of steadfastness. The disposition governing his conversion of externally imposed hunger into chosen fasting is not exactly Job's fatalism. He also fasts when there is food, and his firm otherworldly orientation does not prevent him from populating mid-range futurity with hopes of one day going to a Bible school, opening his own church, having his own home, getting married and so on. He acts upon these desires through prayers, 'seed money', and life planning, and sees them as non-contradictory. He has the conviction that divine blessings will come on his way, but at 'God's appointed time', and can testify to many blessings already received.

Despite his short stature and reserved disposition, Richard exudes a strong sense of dignity and conviction. He speaks about God's plan for humanity full of *gravitas*. The authority that emanates from him many times humbled me, the unbeliever, along with his audiences. For Richard, its source is crystal clear, the Holy Spirit, so he would certainly disagree not only with Gifford and Fabian's portrait of African charismatics as spiritually deprived, but also with Piot's claim that their power of initiative 'seems entirely theirs'. Such dignifying force had to be cared for, as it cared for him, so Richard also strove to be in control of his choices and relationships, to protect them from short-time necessities. For example, he never accepted my offers of financial aid, even when I told him that, as an anthropologist being funded with American money, I was allowed to give 'gifts for informants'. 'Gifts for informants' were not 'offerings' or 'seed money'. They were not even really a gift, just a non-dignifying donation, since he never considered what he gave me – information and experiences, but not salvation – a means of reciprocity.

Already used to his *modus operandi*, as we approached Kwame Nkrumah Circle to take a bus to Kumasi, I was uncertain if he would actually make it to Atwea. But soon Richard's plans became clear. He would not travel for free. He would rather 'speak the Word', and this would take him to our destination. Like a 'fisher of men' (Matthew 4.19), Richard waited for the right catch, and so did I. Three hours, and five buses later, he found a driver who was not only tolerant about his presence among the passengers, but actually knew him from previous occasions. Before our trip started, Richard prayed for the driver one to one and 'spoke words in his life', so the Holy Spirit would grant us a safe trip.

Richard's bus preaching that day was vintage evangelism, a Pentecostal genre concerned with repentance and salvation. But his evangelistic voice in many ways also replicated the multiple temporalities shaping his very life, which can be arranged, but hardly totalized, by the notion of the 'end-times'. As shown by Harding (1994), secular and biblical history are not simply contrasted or paralleled by contemporary born-again Christians, one being illusory, the other literally true. They are typologically fused in practice (Frei 1986), a major example being the global popularity of pre-millenarian notions like the end-times, to which most charismatics abide. Richard defines himself as an 'end-times evangelist'. The end-times is a period of salvation history or a 'dispensation' that antecedes Jesus's second coming. It is a present acceleration of the end, whose basic signs are both impressive evangelistic growth and increasing opposition from demons and fake ministers. It is a time out of joint, where unexpected natural,

geopolitical, religious, social and economic events proliferate. Redemption is at hand, but amidst great confusion outside and inside the church.

According to Marshall, for Pentecostals, the *parousia*, the long-awaited second coming of Christ, 'is both immanent, through the presence of the Holy Spirit in every believer, and imminent in the end-times: the coming of the messiah is not to be feared, held back, or deferred, but exalted and hastened' (2009: 205). In practice though, the end-times is an open-ended temporal umbrella, inciting the proliferation of temporal dispositions. These include anxious anticipations of the end, as illustrated by a number of outdoors that appeared in Accra in 2011 advising the population to prepare for Judgement Day, which would happen on 21 May of that same year. Like most converts, Richard laughed at such alarmism, and argued that apocalyptic 'date setting' was itself a sign of the end-times, according to Revelations.

We realize that the end-time is resilient as a horizon not because it is hermetically sealed, like an orthodoxy, but because it is incredibly elastic, being both context-sensitive and self-referential, totalizing and 'punctuated' (Guyer 2007) or event-driven. As such, it is almost impossible to falsify. Accusing an end-timer of delusion would simply corroborate it, since accusations and persecutions are themselves signs of the end. It is also markedly agonistic. Richard's basic message is that the present is an ongoing struggle between good and evil, so without the Holy Spirit's aid one is entirely unequipped to move through this thick moral and spiritual jungle and see the bright end of Heaven. The end-time has no room for world-fleeing asceticism or mystical quietism. Power is the key, and faith must be resilient. Such tragic historicity was embodied by Richard's preaching voice that afternoon as it oscillated with equal intensity along the temporalities of salvation, miracles and dystopia.

He began with exhortations to 'leave all things behind' and promised that 'whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life', evoking a soothing feeling of *hope in the life to come*. Richard's *other-worldly voice* was counter-cultural and used the end as a vantage point to question common sense. The solution he offered to his audience's frustrations was not moving from waiting to fulfilment, but to access the big picture and wait differently: as a born-again Christian. A few minutes later though, he shifted to testimonies about impaired legs growing miraculously during a crusade in Kumasi, a body raised from the dead in Korle-Bu Hospital's morgue, and an alcoholic who became an accomplished international minister. They evidenced that the God who brings salvation is also a 'living God', so to serve him is a path to *near-future blessings*. Richard's *this-worldly voice* incited different types of anticipation: 'you will

achieve, expect healing, prosperity, moral turnovers, because 'in Christ Jesus, all things are possible'.

These desire-awakening scenes were tempered with *spiritual underworlds and apocalyptic signs*. Richard's *under-worldly voice* was equally evidence-based. A testimony of a 'Sakawa boy' was used to depict in detail this mix of occultism and cybercrime (Oduro-Frimpong 2014) and warn against the high costs of embracing ungodly means for short-term gains. Comments about corrupt prophets deceiving congregations, engaging in improper sexual relations, and looking for spiritual powers with 'fetish priests' exemplified how, during the end-times, trust will disintegrate even within the body of Christ. The sufferings caused by the civil war in Ivory Coast, political uproars in Tunisia and Egypt, and floods in Indonesia were described in morbid detail and 'backed' with biblical citations.

The audience engaged with Richard's performance variously. Some remained indifferent, others paid close attention and swayed along through feelings of wonder, hope, disbelief, humbleness, suspicion, pious fear and even entertainment. After taking us for a ride on this verbal roller-coaster, Richard concluded with a 'praise and worship' session, followed by most of the passengers. As the bus became a mobile church, we returned to where he had started: the blessings of Heaven, of waiting for salvation. Popular hymns like *Ohene Oreba* (The King is Coming) announced that Christ, 'our warrior/protector' (*ɔsabarima ei*), 'will come and take us to celebrate with Him' (*ɔbeba befa yen na y'akodi ehurusi*), and a Nigerian song repeated over and over again: 'I have another world in view; my Saviour is gone to prepare me a place.'

We may claim that Richard's lifestyle and preaching voice exemplify the 'proliferation of criteria for efficacious action' (Mbembe and Roitman 1995: 342) afflicting the African subject of crisis. Indeed, rather than domesticate crisis, the end-times assert once and for all that the norm is and will continue to be contingency. But by doing so, it also provides believers with embodied tools to dwell and endure in these times of emergency (Marshall 2009). What Richard offers to his audiences is ultimately the same ethical-spiritual equipment (Foucault 2005) that allows him to seek ethical coherence not against, but with all the odds.² This is basically an equipment of temporal navigation, in which coherence is achieved in ways akin to Bakhtin's (1981) heteroglossic novel, that is, not by establishing a homogenous temporal horizon, but through an ongoing orchestration of chronotopes, narrative spacetimes endowed with specific economies of agency: temporalities of salvation, blessings and underworlds. We will see similar dynamics underpinning prayers in Atwea.

Peoples, rhythms and times of Atwea Mountain

After we arrived in Kumasi, it did not take long before Richard and I joined a van to Sekyere Central district, where the Atwea township is located. The inflow of Christians has visibly transformed the small town's economic life. Local traders provide them with basic goods, and food sellers come atop twice every day before 9am and after 6pm, serving those who choose to break fasting. The track leading to the mountain's top is beautiful, but long and steep, taking about 45 minutes. Young men offer to carry the pilgrims' loads for a few Ghana cedis. Their services are often required, since visitors bring foam mattresses and bags with clothes. Entire church congregations come for retreat at Atwea Mountain, so plastic chairs, pulpits and sound systems have to be carried upward. As different prayer camps emerged, a local labour force was vital to transport the materials used to build a durable Christian infrastructure at the top: generators, wooden shacks, and houses made of rocks extracted from the mountains and cemented.

Richard and I stayed at Camp 3, run by the Methodist Church. It is the first and more established one, where there are multiple rock houses, a chapel and a large cross. Dormitories are free of charge. As we socialized in our dormitory, we met a few people who spontaneously stuck together as a small prayer team. One of them was Akosua, aka Sweet Mother, a Pentecostal prophetess in her thirties, recently returned from Italy, where her parents had migrated ten years ago. An unsuccessful process of adaptation and persistent dreams, which she interpreted as God calling her home to do his work, led Akosua back to Kumasi in 2008. She founded her Jesus is the Answer Family Church in 2010, after acting as a street evangelist for two years. She pays frequent visits to Atwea and organizes larger church excursions to the prayer mountain. On this occasion, Akosua was accompanied by three of her 'prayer warriors' and apprentices: Abekan, Adjei and Sylvester. Some of the reasons bringing them to Atwea were: to pray for 'church growth', for 'more anointing' from God to do his work, and to intercede for two of their community members, who had been sick.

Akosua is single and has no biological offspring. Her epithet, Sweet Mother, exemplifies the centrality of spiritual kinship for Christian discipleship in Ghana more generally (Reinhardt 2014: 318–322). In the particular case of 18-year-old Sylvester, Christian kinship acquires a more visceral version, since both his parents died in a car crash three years ago in the Ivory Coast, where they lived. After the tragic event, Sylvester returned to Kumasi, in a frustrating attempt to live with his extended family. Unsatisfied and depressed, Sylvester was expecting to migrate to Libya, but 'the hand of God' made his and the prophetess's paths

cross one day, at a dusty roadside, when she 'led him to Christ'. A few months later, Akosua invited Sylvester to move to her home: 'My life improved day by day: a lot of prayer, Bible reading, going to church. She is a good mother. It's good to see how a pastor lives and helps.' According to Sylvester, God knew that both him and the prophetess had been disconnected from those they loved the most, so this shared vulnerability would bring mutual healing. Like his peers, Sylvester dreams about becoming a full-time minister, maybe expanding the prophetess's church through branches, maybe opening his own church in Ghana or even in Europe or America. He was 'praying about' his future.

The last member of our small group was Reverend Ocran, the experienced head pastor of Stone Temple International, founded in Madina, Accra, in 2000, today counting seven branches in the Greater Accra region. Ocran has trained many pastors informally, and has recently opened a modest Bible school in Madina. An original member of the now mega church, International Central Gospel Church, Ocran became born-again in 1985. In 1989, unable to find a job in Ghana, he decided to move to Nigeria to 'follow Benson Idahosa', the pioneer of the Pentecostal-charismatic movement in West Africa. Those were dire times, of living 'from hand to mouth' and 'a work a day'. He never joined Idahosa's Bible school, in Benin City, as he expected. Despite his trials, Ocran considers this a period of great spiritual renewal, in which 'Heavens were opened, and God started to speak to me while I was asleep, through dreams.' He started 'pursuing the call' and 'growing in the ministry' while acting as a street evangelist in Lagos and collaborating with local spiritual fathers. He was able to save some money and return to Accra in 1996. Since then, he got married, completed a degree in Theology at ICGC's private university, and founded his church a year after graduation. Ocran attributes all his life improvements to God, since 'propagating the gospel takes you far', and continues to make plans. The most pressing ones are opening a library in his Bible school, improving church structures (most of them are incomplete) and buying a van for the church. He was praying for these blessings in Atwea as well as for more 'anointing' from God, since he was about to organize a healing crusade in Accra.

Justification for Atwea's social attraction was twofold among our group. One was environmental. Its natural isolation was deemed conducive to practices of faith. Richard contrasted Atwea's tranquillity with the fast-paced rhythms of Accra, where the bustle of life can make your ears deaf to God's voice. But seclusion was also about freedom to produce Christian noise, that is, pray long and feverously into the night without being interrupted by complaining neighbours. Pilgrimage to Atwea was legitimized through a figurative recourse to

biblical mountains: Moses climbing Mount Sinai to ‘appear before God’ (Ex. 19), Elijah praying for rain in Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18), and Jesus at the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt. 17). Sylvester also described Atwea as a socially conducive environment, which gave him the opportunity for fellowship with men of God and learn.

The second justification was entirely testimonial: miracles have happened at Atwea before, word spread, stories multiplied, and people started flocking to it to pray for visas, jobs, marriage partners, prosperity and fertility. God simply ‘works’ this way: at different intensities and places, and through specific vessels. Atwea seems to have a special place in his plans, although converts might disagree about how the God–Atwea relation is normatively envisioned (Coleman 2002). Many people I have met during my fieldwork in Accra received their baptism with the evidence of tongues in Atwea, which was also the case with Sweet Mother’s prayer warriors. Pastors and apprentice pastors, like those in our group, often come to the mountain to pray for the ‘the anointing’, the ministerial grace that allows ministers to perform great miracles, preach powerfully and attract followers. A number of famous Ghanaian ministers are known for having received their anointing in Atwea after long periods of fasting and prayer: Salifu Amoako, Agyin-Asare, Duncan-Williams, Mensa-Otabil and others. Regardless of whether they were facts or rumours, these testimonies reveal what I consider to be the substance of Atwea’s fame: desire and mimetism (Girard 1976: 1–52).

The mimetic relay of past miracles through testimonies about Atwea is coeval to the mimetic relay of desire for God and for his blessings. The result is a mimetic proliferation of desire itself. Popular ministers like Richard, Ocran and Sweet Mother *desire to be like* these influential men of God. A visible effect of the prosperity theology axiom that ‘doing the work of God takes you far’ among them is that they ‘think big’ (Drønen 2013: 133). Their entrepreneurial imagination is undeterred by their current social standing. After all, the same God they serve has raised other ministers from obscurity to notability. It means that they desire to *have what their models have* – big churches, visibility, influence – by *desiring what they desired*, the Object that ultimately made these expectations a reality for them: God’s empowering grace. Even more so, they *desire to desire like them* in Atwea: to submit to God through fasting and prayer at length, to attune themselves to receive from God whenever he is ready to give. The result is a powerful machine of space-time compression fuelled by the prospective force of faith: Moses, Elijah, Jesus, Amoako, Agyin-Asare, Duncan-William, Richard, Ocran, Sweet Mother in Mount Sinai, Mount Carmel, the Mount of Transfiguration, Atwea, all at once, waiting for God.

There are two basic forms of understanding this expression, waiting for God, in Atwea. The first is expanded. It means simply spending time in Atwea, a week, a month, even a year. It is the totality of practices and experiences happening there: various prayer genres, services organized by the camps, Bible reading groups and the conviviality invoked by Sylvester above and by Richard, when he referred to Atwea as 'a Bible school for the poor'. The second is more circumscribed, hence easier to grasp empirically, so it will be my focus here: to wait for God is to engage in 'travailing prayers', long prayer sessions preceded by fasting, whereby specific hopes and grievances are presented to God.

As implied by its very name, travailing prayers are intensive, lengthy moments of physical and moral expenditure. They are an athletic form of inhabiting the very gap between human and divine wills, and exemplify the complex grey-zone of agency laying inbetween the self-fulfilling waiting of prayer and the technical effectiveness of incantations, as highlighted by Mauss. The relation between human and divine wills during these prayers is rather inchoate, given the sacramental status of the born-again body as the Holy Spirit's recipient. God is both addressed by these prayers in his transcendental sovereignty and immanently present in the very act of prayer through glossolalia. The praying body is a resonance chamber used by the Spirit's pneumatic force to flow through 'unknown tongues' and unknown intentionality. But the Christian resonance chamber is conscious, so to travail in prayers is to attempt to call God's attention to specific 'prayer points' assigned by the vessel, to make God will as the vessel does. As we moved into the bush the following night to 'wait for the Lord' from 9pm to 3am, this economy of agency came out forcefully in all its temporal potentialities.

Ocran, due to his seniority both biologically and 'in Christ', spontaneously became our prayer leader. Prayer leaders are like coaches or maestros. They orient the ritual series and sustain its corporate rhythms, objects of attention and dominant chronotopes. We started with a *worship session*, spiritual songs sang in unison for about 20 minutes, with the aid of clapping and a cymbal. Ocran managed the passages between different hymns and we followed by example. Songs were aimed at awakening God's presence, the presence that, paradoxically, has already always been there, in the Spirit-filled believer. The atmospheric quality of worship songs reflects music's capacity to engender 'mutual tuning-in relationships' (Schutz 1955: 79), whereby the I and the You become enveloped into a synchronic We. Within a spirituality in which music is a spiritual practice, 'praise and worship', the We produced by co-performance is animated by the charismatic weight of an Other. The result is an intensification

of presence across an affective threshold, a corporate 'coming out' of the Spirit, which gains in power and motion.

We then moved to *confession and repentance*. Ocran advised us to tell God how small we were, confess backslides, repent and ask for his power and grace. His suggestion gave birth to a cacophony of voices. The dominant chronotope here was that of *salvation* and the whole procedure was nothing but a reiteration of the basic steps of conversion itself: to confess, to repent, to accept that you cannot save yourself, and to submit one's destiny to Christ. Every prayer is a renewal of such a primary covenant.

Once God was invoked through songs and pasts had been closed and cleansed by his saving presence, the next and longer stage started, when the corporate flow of glossolalia was ignited and directed to specific 'prayer points' across many hours. We were about to enter the chronotope of *miracles and blessings*. The overall dynamics of prayer was a constant intercalation of glossolalia and prayer points like: 'Father, give us the power and the ability to do your work' [glossolalia] – 'Father, give us the anointing to do your work' [glossolalia] – 'God, give us wisdom to do your work' [glossolalia]. Ocran both participated and spoke over the prayer flow by either animating it with 'more fire, more fire' or slowing it down before shifting prayer points with a closing 'amen'. Specific prayer points about financial, health and family problems were added. Akosua cited the names and grievances afflicting the two members of her church they were interceding for. The 'moral mood' (Throop 2014) accompanying those prayers was rather ambiguous. They were a self-afflicting plea to God, expressed through the participant's words and the glossolalia's self-abasing repetition. And yet, they were also hopeful and even self-fulfilling, a form of entering imaginary futures. After each prayer point, Ocran led us into anticipatory scenes followed by thanksgiving, such as 'I see the anointing coming! Your oil is falling on us, oh Lord! Thank you Jesus!'

A few hours later, there was a spontaneous turn toward the chronotopes of *warfare prayers*. Prayer points and moods visibly changed, transitioning from hopeful pleas toward a dark and militaristic ambiance filled with authoritative attacks on the devil. Akosua readdressed our attention to her church members and declared that any 'demonic covenant' affecting their health was now broken. As glossolalia went up again, she continued burning 'hidden covenants' with the Holy Ghost's fire, later adding: 'In this world, we're not living alone, but with darkness and demons... Some of us bought land, but it was taken from you illegally. You opened a shop, but it didn't work. In church, you don't even get one person to attend. Your marriage is falling apart. Let's bind all these attacks on our

destiny.' Glossolalia itself acquired an agonistic tone, becoming more guttural. Bodies shook more and gestured more aggressively. The practice reached a peak of militaristic intensity when Ocran stepped in again and declared he would like us to recite from a Nigerian prayer booklet. From that point on, participants engaged with a type of warfare creed recitation. Ocran read from the booklet in the first person and individuals embraced this subject position by repeating the sentences after him: 'Lord Jesus [Repetition], use my mouth [R] as a gun [R], to cancel my enemies [R]'. The recitation went on as the list of spiritual weaponry expanded into a 'machine gun', an 'armour tank', a 'bomb', a 'submarine', a 'grenade', and so on.

After bombarding the devil and his hordes for many hours, we changed temporal gears one last time. Darkness gave room to light and hope again, as Ocran led us into a *closing worship session*, which lasted about 20 minutes. In a dynamic quite similar to Richard's preaching a few days earlier, we ended at the time of salvation. We were transported there through words of thanksgiving and visions of redemption, such as 'My hope is in your Word. I am waiting for your promise. Your favour blesses me. All glory to the Lamb of God.'

As praises receded, we started walking back from the bush to our dormitory. The anthropologist was visibly tired, if not bored, in his lack of resources to wait for God. The believers looked surprisingly re-energized, despite their impressive display of religious athleticism. They chatted informally and cracked jokes, as if they had not, only a few minutes ago, seen Heaven, claimed marvellous miracles and bound the devil. We all rapidly fell asleep. At 7am, Richard woke me up to tell me he was walking to the bush with Sylvester and Abekan to have a 'quiet time' session, a charismatic form of meditation (Reinhardt 2017: 58–59). Still exhausted, I nodded and went back to sleep, as a new day of waiting for God had begun in Atwea.

Virtual futures, impatience and the force of waiting

We must learn to wait upon God during prayer because they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength (Isaiah 40.31).

Simone Weil and Marcel Mauss represent two quite different stances on the problem of waiting. Whereas Weil emphasizes the Christian singularity of waiting as *hupomoné*, Mauss's work is marked by a progressive generalization of waiting, from an intrinsic component of phenomena like prayer and the gift to

a generative category of social life as such. Both authors coincide nevertheless when they define waiting as an ongoing ethical labour, whose force is matched by its fragility: the labour of recognizing the internal goods of vulnerability, hence embracing actively and hopefully the temporal openness and the contingency entailed by human heteronomy. We may say that it is amidst such struggles that the waiting of faith is both integrated into, and becomes dissociable from, the multiple waitings shaping the contemporary, such ethical labour acquiring more complex overtones as part of the post-colony's 'time on the move' (Mbembe 2001).

As testified to by Richard's case, attempts to stabilize the Pentecostal subject of crisis through single frames and structures of agency are likely to find it inauthentic, contradictory or simply unintelligible, which explains the highly contradictory scholarly diagnostics about this religious movement. When Richard fasts and prays during times of food deprivation, he looks like an ascetic world renouncer. But when he uses his scarce resources as 'seed money', he looks like a self-deceiving miracle-seeker. When he preaches about the imminent second coming of Jesus, he is messianic. But when he promises miraculous 'breakthroughs', he is ready to embrace the here and now. When Richard tells his audiences he is not preaching because of their money, he looks sanctified. But when he is glad to receive their offerings, he looks hypocritical. Such heteroglossic dynamics find their apex in his divinely appointed mission: to attract people to a Christian community that, according to his own words, has been plagued by deception and trickery. Welcome to the end-times, a historicity that I characterized not as a cultural system or a narrative response to an otherwise meaningless context of instability, but as part of an equipment of endurance capable of dwelling and acting upon post-colonial pluralism through various chronotopes.

Waiting for God in Atwea is as heteroglossic as Richard's life and preaching. The time of salvation is not only ritually replicated in travelling prayers through worship songs and confession and repentance. It presents itself immanently in the Holy Spirit, thus, in the flow of prayer itself, since the Spirit is the very energetic force driving it forward. Travailing prayers are literally end-times prayers, transporting performers through salvation and into miracles and underworlds. As part of an ethical and spiritual apparatus, travelling in prayer is a ritual event, with its own self-justifying cathartic effects, but it is also a medium 'of transformation of logos into ethos' (Foucault 2005: 327), which makes subjects anew by equipping them with forms of temporal navigation that are, ultimately, modes of existence: existence-as-waiting. I conclude by considering

two temporal dispositions gestated by this practice: those embedded in 'positive confessions' and those embedded in 'spiritual warfare'.

A strict definition of a positive confession would be 'a statement that lays claim in God's provision and promises in the present' (Coleman 2000: 28). They are uttered during preaching, healing, prayers and everyday life. Their widespread use reflects charismatics' generalized engagement with a language ideology that stresses the performative power of faithful words to 'claim' blessings (Coleman 2006). As we have seen, positive confessions endow travelling prayers with a multi-cyclical dynamics, made of a number of passages from submissive pleads for blessings to anticipatory fulfilments and thanksgiving: Father, give us the anointing – I see your oil falling on us – Thank you, Lord. Although positive confessions can certainly become a sort of self-help dispositive, they are more than rhetorical tricks concerned with boosting one's morale. Indeed, I believe positive confessions offer a good entry point into charismatics' distinctive way of exercising the prospective force of faith as 'confidence in what we hope for, assurance about we do not see' (Heb. 11.1).

Whenever taken as a temporal disposition, more than a rhetorical formula, positive confessions index a style of waiting for God, a modality of attention. Such a waiting style is very alien to Weil's quietist definition of attention as 'suspending our thought, leaving it detached, empty, and ready to be penetrated by the Object' (Weil 1996: 111). It thrives by moving toward its Object desirously and even athletically, through constant ritual, imaginary and volitional stimulation. However, it is not merely magical either, a simple 'let my will be done'. It is *waiting by claiming*. I believe much of the gravitas and the sense of dignity imparted by someone like Richard is a reflex to how the miraculous impinges upon his everyday life as a virtual Object, something real but not yet actual at its fullness, 'the insistence of that which is not given' (Zourabichvili 2012: 215).³ It means that Richard not only 'thinks big', he actually (and partially) lives in the virtual future God has reserved for him. In this sense, Richard is not what I see, but what he is about to become, according to God's own time.

Similar to positive confessions, a strict definition of spiritual warfare is that of a series of ritual practices concerned with opposing demons, ranging from plain exorcism and other forms of 'deliverance' to the everyday habit of 'cancelling' life issues using the name of Jesus. Sylvester told me about his habit of 'cancelling evil thoughts' by uttering the name of Jesus through inner speech, that is, making inner warfare and cleansing his mind of any sinful stimuli. For committed charismatics, demons, just like the miraculous, have a conspicuous and ordinary presence. In consonance, the ethical and spiritual weaponry they use to subdue

evil is retrospective, post-factum or post-attack, but also prospective, constituting a specific temporal disposition. Although Akosua presented specific cases of demonic opposition to be tackled during their prayers, most of the spiritual warfare they waged had no retrospective object in mind. They prayed mostly against ‘attacks on their destiny’. We may say that they waged war against evil forces counter-actualizing the virtual future God had reserved to them. Instead of opposing ‘binding the devil’ to ‘waiting for God’, I rather see spiritual warfare as a form of *waiting by pre-emptively attacking*.

Most charismatics in Ghana take as an axiomatic fact that the world as it is – the same world in which salvation is conceded and miracles are always about to be actualized – belongs to the Devil, and will continue to do so until Christ returns. To be a Christian, to wait for God, is to continuously attune oneself to be in touch with His will and power, hence to bind the Devil’s natural drive to prey on one’s future. It is amidst these multiple potentialities that various breeds of charismatic faith are gestated: some more salvation-oriented, others more miracle- or demons-oriented. One-sided fixation on each of these temporal modes generates their own negative-feedback loops on Christian waiting: anxious anticipations of the end; sterile, magical, rather than desire-awakening quests for miracles, which often lead to unbelief; and a paranoid and Sisyphus-like obsession with demons and ‘hidden covenants’, to the point that one’s very born-again status can be put into check. But converts also build their own temporal chemistries to endure, and inhabit all these times at diverse intensities. Waiting for God in Atwea is a temporal and pedagogical journey throughout all these chronotopes, hence also a form of avoiding over-fixating attention. We may say that travelling in prayers is a heteroglossic, albeit generative, means of cultivating steadfastness.

It is telling that, any time debates about ‘backsliding’, immorality and other malaise affecting the body of Christ in Ghana emerged among our group, the main cause raised to make sense of them was not demons or how Africa is especially prone to their reproduction due to past ‘idolatry’. After all, for charismatics, demons do what they are supposed to do, even if they have different territorial intensities. The main driving force allowing crisis to contaminate the Church, according to them, was the proliferation of ‘impatient Christians’. During one of our informal group chats, Ocran described this particular Christian breed as follows: ‘That’s what life has done to our people in Ghana. So much suffering... They pray for food, see? You shouldn’t pray for food. That’s not how you approach an important person like God. You pray for His grace to do great things. People don’t know how to wait for God any more.’

Impatient Christians are those who have exhausted their ability to engage with the ethical labour of waiting through an over-excitation of near-future hopes, a simple conversion of the temporality of survival into Christianity. Their attention has been engulfed by the voracious will of 'the world', to the point that they cannot learn how to wait as a Christian any more. This is not a matter of material constraints only. As I argued in Richard's case, although his life is constantly threatened by the ghost of necessity and unfolds through an endless series of improvisational strategies, it still conveys a strong sense of purpose, the force of waiting. Contrary to 'impatient Christians', Richard is not stuck into a 'stalled present', 'stricken with immobility and pain', 'an endlessly extending present' (Scott 2014b: 6). He moves and lives into the future. This difference is, again, not graspable through what we see, which in both cases is precarity, but in how and if these alternative life forms move, as they wait, vulnerably.

Notes

- 1 On the enskilled dimension of religious waiting, see Lester's (2003) argument about how the ritualization of life in a Roman Catholic convent in Mexico gestates the 'immediacy of the eternal'. In the anthropology of Islam, see Mahmood (2005) on *sabr*, the Islamic virtue of patience as 'bounded by both an eschatological structure and a social one' (173) and 'a site of considerable investment, struggle, and achievement' (174). Hirschkind (2006) underlines how religious waiting is cultivated among pious Muslims through techniques of anticipation concerned with remembering and 'tasting' death in the now time, as if 'eschatology is now' (173–204).
- 2 Equipment or *pareiskeue* are 'inductive schemas of action which, in their inductive value and effectiveness, are such that when present in the head, thoughts, heart, and even body of someone who possesses them, that person will then act as if spontaneously' (Foucault 2005: 325).
- 3 See Reinhardt (2015) for a more detailed argument on virtuality and Pentecostal spirituality.

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Providence and Publicity in Waiting for a Creationist Theme Park

James S. Bielo

June 2012. It is a few minutes after 9am, and I am sitting in the boardroom of a Kentucky design studio, the headquarters for a creationist theme park in the making. Ark Encounter – with a literalist replication of Noah’s ark depicted in the Book of Genesis as its centrepiece – was a park with an uncertain future at the time. The morning staff meeting had just ended; I lingered afterward with the design team leader, Patrick, and an administrative assistant for the Answers in Genesis ministry, Sandy. They continued discussing the meeting’s closing topic, details for a fundraising event to be held later in the month. As the conversation ended, Sandy stood looking at a piece of concept art for the park.

‘It’s so beautiful,’ she said earnestly to no one in particular. ‘It is,’ Patrick responded flatly, ‘maybe it’ll happen, maybe it won’t.’ After eight months of fieldwork at the studio, this was the first time I had heard doubt voiced publicly about if, not when, the project would materialize. The force of the doubt was amplified by Patrick’s leadership status as Ark Encounter’s creative director. Everyone dispersed to their offices and cubicles as usual, but his words hung in the air, unresolved.

Ark Encounter did not stay unresolved. The project opened to the public in July 2016, more than two years after its initially scheduled opening. Across twenty or so uncertain months of waiting, from spring 2012 through early 2014, media reports focused on the project’s fundraising troubles. News story after news story questioned whether legal challenges regarding the park’s application for enrolment in a state tax reimbursement programme had injected investors with

anxious caution. Behind the scenes, among the cubicle desks of Patrick and his team, a different story unfolded. This chapter explores the team's experience of the uncertain months and develops two analyses: the forms of creative labour and theological commitment that filled the team's waiting. Interspersed with these analyses, I reflect on my fieldwork experience with the team and ask how different forms of waiting shaped this particular ethnographic encounter.

How might the team's experience inform a comparative anthropology of waiting as a process? Ghassan Hage (2009) argues that waiting is a lively opportunity to pose questions about agency. Is waiting active or inactive, a form of action or the deferment of action? Brun (2015) argues that the 'protracted uncertainty' experienced by Georgian refugees is realized as 'agency-in-waiting', producing both frustrated boredom and a future-oriented hope. Similarly, Kwon's (2015) work with married Chinese couples waiting to be reunited after transnational migration to Korea finds waiting to be 'an active attempt to realize a collectively imagined future' (479). While the Ark team's creative process was at the mercy of broader institutional efforts to raise money, and by extension broader political-economic conditions that frustrated fundraising, their waiting was anything but passive. Through creative labour, they played a pivotal role in advancing the ministry's fundraising agenda.

The Ark team also illuminates how waiting is a phenomenologically rich and revealing process, reflecting cultivated dispositions and the structural conditions that produce forms of waiting (Hage 2009). Comparative ethnography has explored this in diverse settings, from displaced refugees (Brun 2015) to urban welfare offices (Auyero 2011). Experiences of waiting range qualitatively from hope to boredom, uncertainty, anxiety, vulnerability and impatience. As the Ark team's waiting shifted into its own form of protracted uncertainty, the team negotiated doubt. They never doubted the purpose or worthiness of their mission, but as Patrick's unease in the opening vignette suggests, uncertainty crept in about if, when and how their project to deliver a creationist theme park to the public would materialize. Pelkmans (2013) argues that commitment and doubt are mutually 'implicated' (4), which was certainly true for the team. Doubts about whether or not Ark Encounter would materialize engaged Christian dispositions about what it means to be faithful and trust God. As I illustrate below, the interplay of doubt, hope, commitment and creative labour characterized the team's experience of waiting.

Public ambitions

Ark Encounter is a project of Answers in Genesis (AiG), a creationist ministry based in northern Kentucky, just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati. The ministry was founded in 1994 by three former employees of the Institute for Creation Research (ICR). Founded in San Diego in 1972, ICR was one of the first organizations dedicated to promoting ‘creation science’ and continues today, although relocated to Dallas. Its late founder, Henry Morris, helped launch the modern creationist movement with his 1961 co-authored book *The Genesis Flood*. Since its founding, AiG has fashioned itself as a ‘popular’ complement to ICR, advancing the same mission of teaching creationism grounded in biblical literalism but aiming to reach a much broader audience (Numbers 1992).

The populist strivings of AiG garnered national attention in 2007 when it opened the Creation Museum in northern Kentucky. The 75,000 square foot facility was a \$30 million project, materializing the creationist worldview through interactive exhibits, multi-media shows, gardens, and a petting zoo (see Figure 5.1).



Figure 5.1 Exhibit display at The Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky. Photo by author

While dozens of creation museums exist on the American landscape, AiG's museum is the largest and most technologically sophisticated. By mid-2015 the museum had welcomed over two million visitors, and has emerged as the primary public face of modern creationism in the United States (Trollinger and Trollinger 2016; cf. Bielo 2016a).

With the museum as its epicentre, AiG functions like other influential fundamentalist organizations – as an empire of cultural production (Harding 2000). They publish books and periodicals, coordinate a research journal, produce films and radio programmes, curate an extensive online library of resources, design Christian home-schooling curricula, host summer Bible camp retreats for kids, and organize creation science teaching tours on Alaskan cruises and Grand Canyon hiking/rafting expeditions. The ministry's most recognizable face, Ken Ham, travels extensively to speak at churches and conferences, maintains an active weblog, hosts a daily online radio programme, and is often asked to speak as a representative voice of Christian conservatism on CNN and other major media outlets. The museum, Ham and all of AiG's materials are anchored by two pillars: a fundamentalist reading of scripture and a vehement critique of evolutionary science as a moral danger to the world (Butler 2010).

Every day, *Answers in Genesis* performs the work of religious publicity. I adopt this term from Matthew Engelke (2013), who presents it as a critical reassessment of how to study the presence of religion in public life. 'When we talk about "public religion" today we are often actually talking about "religious publicity"' (xv). By this he means that the status of religion being public should not be taken for granted. Instead, 'public' should be understood as a status that is actively pursued, achieved, promoted and managed by socially positioned religious actors who are possessed by particular strategic aims. This reassessment emerges from Engelke's ethnographic work with the British Bible Society. Through campaigns in multiple English cities, from holiday displays to billboards, the Bible Advocacy team sought to 'counteract the idea that religion ought to be, or even must be, a private affair' by 'trying to promote and in many cases improve the image, relevance, and uptake of the Bible' (xiv).

The religious publicity of *Answers in Genesis* is defined by several interlaced ambitions. First, they seek to educate the public about creationism. This is essentially about circulating distinctive creationist claims grounded in a strict fundamentalist literalism, such as a 6,000-year-old earth, the reality of a global flood that killed all humans except Noah and his family, and the historical coexistence of humans and dinosaurs. This basic ambition props up two further aims: to generate and foster doubt about the authority of evolutionary science,

and to simultaneously bolster the legitimacy of creationism. This double-edged strategy of detracting and producing authority supports other creationist efforts, such as manoeuvring to influence public school science curricula. AiG also hopes to create alternative digital and brick-and-mortar spaces of pedagogy, devotion and religious entertainment. The Creation Museum is a safe haven for committed creationists who are wary and suspicious of evolutionary-infused science and natural history museums. Finally, the religious publicity of the ministry is evangelistic. They seek to proclaim a fundamentalist Protestant theology, hoping that non-fundamentalists will, immediately or eventually, experience spiritual conviction and a born-again conversion or rededication.

When Ark Encounter opened in July 2016, it became the largest, most expensive expression of these ambitions. It capitalized on the ministry's work and success since 1994, which emerged from ICR and other institutions that comprised the early infrastructure of the modern creationist movement.

Ark Encounter

Set on 800 acres (324 hectares) of Kentucky rolling hills – 40 miles (64 kilometres) south of Cincinnati – the park's centrepiece is an all-wooden re-creation of Noah's ark, built to creationist specification from the text of Genesis 6–9. If the park is profitable, subsequent stages will be added to feature other materialized biblical replicas, such as the Tower of Babel. All tolled, the park is projected to cost more than \$170 million. The completed ark required nearly four million board feet (nearly 9,000 cubic metres) of timber, stands 51 feet (15 metres) tall, 85 feet (26 metres) wide, 510 feet (155 metres) long, and contains more than 1,00,000 square feet (9,290 square metres) of themed exhibit space (see Figure 5.2).

Visitors to the park progress through three decks on the ark filled with a mix of sculpted animals, animatronic figures, interactive displays, multimedia exhibits, food vendors and children's play areas. Each deck is organized by a particular affective experience.

Deck One centres on the drama of Noah and his family following the closing of the ark door. They are relieved to have escaped a terrifying storm, they have just witnessed mass death and they are anxious about the weeks ahead. The creative team always talked about Deck One as the 'darkest' of the decks, indexed sensually by low levels of lighting. The storm will be audible; visitors hear sounds of wind, rain, thunder and debris banging against the ark's sides. Noah and his family comfort the confused and disturbed animals and each other amid the difficult conditions.



Figure 5.2 Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky. Photo by author

Deck Two focuses on the tasks and challenges of living on the ark. Noah and his family are settled, going about their liminal living: the daily grind of tending the onboard garden, caring for the animals and managing daily routines. This is designed as the primary ‘how-to’ deck, addressing numerous ‘practical’ issues about this biblical story. How did Noah and his family feed all the animals? What did they do with all the animal waste? How were air, water and sunlight distributed? What did Noah’s workshop and library look like? By addressing these questions, Deck Two emphasizes the creationist claim that pre-flood people were capable of incredibly sophisticated technology because of their long lifespans (in their literalist reading, Noah lived to be 950 years old).

Deck Three continues themes from the first two decks and introduces several new experiences. More exhibits teach about animal kinds. More exhibits address how-to matters, such as what the passengers’ living quarters were like and what technology Noah used to build the ark. Deck Three also captures the salvific realization that God’s wrath has been expended, the storm is over, the waters receded, the eight passengers spared and the whole world is now theirs. This experience of awe transitions into creationist teaching points about post-flood life, such as the Tower of Babel dispersal of languages and people groups. Deck

Three most intentionally teaches creationist typological hermeneutics, which interprets the Noah story as a type of salvation foreshadowing Jesus.

As visitors move through these three decks, 132 exhibit bays (44 per deck) combine to present a creationist narrative about the steadfast faithfulness of Noah and his family, their salvation, and, ultimately, the fundamentalist Gospel. The iconicity of moving from darkness to light, from judgement to salvation, was a very self-conscious decision by the creative team. They want visitors to experience this narrative progression as they walk, physically impacted by the affective force of sensory and material immersion.

Ark Encounter is a \$170 million testimony. It is missionization, massively materialized, performed in the key of biblical literalism, and organized by a strategic model of religious conversion: plausibility-immersion. First, the team sought to demonstrate the historical plausibility of the Noah story. They begin with the premise that it was physically and technologically possible for Noah to have built the ark described in Genesis 6. The project claims to use the exact dimensions detailed in scripture and only building materials that would have been available to Noah, namely timber and iron. Through different exhibits, the team portrays tools and techniques Noah might have used, although the project's publicity materials repeatedly explain that modern construction technology (e.g. cranes) was necessary, for instance, to complete construction within the timeframe required by building permits.

However, plausibility alone is not enough. Noah's story cannot merely be told; it must be felt. Affective response plays a vital role in this model of conversion. For them, success is not simply figured as effectively articulating the details of creationist doctrine; it is about effectively engineering an experience that compels non-creationist visitors towards conversion. What was the pre-flood world like, the one so wicked that God decided death was the only adequate judgement? What was it like to be surrounded by mass extinction? What was Noah's experience in building the ark, and preparing for the weeks on board? How did it feel to be inside the ark when the door closed; to hear the fierce storm outside and the cacophony of animals? What was the experience of living on the ark day after day? And, what was it like when the dove did not return, to see the rainbow and be the centre of God's saving grace?

An immersive experience promises to bridge the gap between plausibility and believability, and the logic of immersive entertainment is the engine that propels the team's creative labour (Stromberg 2009). To be immersed in the creationist past is to be immersed in a past where a universal flood killed everyone on earth except eight people. Six of these eight people, Noah's three sons and their wives,

are the genetic ancestors for all modern humans. All the world's animals are the result of microevolution from the limited number of animal kinds brought onboard the ark. In this past, the earth is roughly 6,000 years old, not roughly 4.5 billion years. Human beings are a special creation of God, not the result of evolutionary processes. All animal kinds, including dinosaurs, coexisted with humans. Pre-flood human lifespans were dramatically longer, Noah building the ark when he was 600 years old and living to 950. The play of this experience is about being immersed in a history, biology and anthropology that works in contrast to that of modern science. At its core, this immersive play is dialogic and ideological, presented as a direct alternative to the scientific past of evolution.

The creative team banks on park visitors becoming caught up in this creationist past. They want to spark our as-if imagination, igniting our capacity as *homo ludens* to engage in playful reverence for biblical miracle, creationist history and fundamentalist truth. They understand themselves as creators of the conditions for conversion, but take no responsibility for immediate or eventual spiritual changes. Patrick explained to me during an interview that the team's job is to provoke visitors to say, "Wow! Maybe that was possible. Maybe that did happen." That's all we can do. The rest is up to the Holy Spirit. Call people to the Church. All we can do is open the door and give them something to think about, and then the rest is up to God to save them.' The team never wavered in their commitment to this human-divine collaboration throughout the process of waiting, but they did question when God would allow the project to continue and why it stalled. Their waiting did not linger on gaining clear answers to these questions; they simply endured them, worked in the meantime, and hoped that God would deliver the necessary funds.

Waiting timelines

Ark Encounter was first announced on 1 December 2010. The Governor of Kentucky – joined by local politicians, Ark representatives and a room full of media personnel – held a public press conference to announce the project as the newest addition to the state's tourism industry. The event intended to clarify why a faith-based project was applying for a sales tax reimbursement programme under the Kentucky Tourism Development Act. The brief question-answer session operated primarily in a legal register, posing and fielding inquiries about Ark Encounter's constitutional legitimacy. Was it a violation of the prohibition against state establishment of religion for a faith-based project to receive a taxpayer-funded economic incentive?

I learned misway through fieldwork that this press conference was premature for AiG. They were not ready to release project details, but their application for the tax reimbursement programme would be filed as a public record and word was bound to spread quickly. For the ministry, it was a choice of managing religious publicity: announce on their terms or be framed by the 'secular' media. At the time, Ark Encounter was not to be opened in phases, but as a complete attraction. The recreated ark was always the centrepiece, but the initial plan also included the Babel replica; a 'journey through Biblical history'; an SFX park ride narrating biblical events connecting Abraham and Moses; a 'Walled City'; an immersive area depicting 'pre-Flood society'; and a 'First-Century village', depicting everyday life in the Holy Land at the time of Jesus. All of the early concept art for the project showed this whole-park vision. When the press conference was held in December 2010, AiG had secured the 800-acre parcel of land, hired the architectural and engineering firm, and initiated the process of securing all of the necessary building permits. While unable to pinpoint an exact date, they declared with no qualifications that Ark Encounter would open during spring 2014.

By November 2011, the ministry had decided to change to a phased-construction plan. Phase One, still linked to the spring 2014 opening date, would include only the ark and a petting zoo. By spring 2012, the ministry had stopped saying 'spring 2014' on anything physical or digital. As the team entered this period of protracted uncertainty, a distinct shift in their horizon of expectations set in (Jansen 2014). Their creative labour shifted from the future park to present-time marketing and publicity. Reading back through my field notes, this shift is clearly marked. In early February 2012, my day at the studio was flush with activity; a six-hour, nearly non-stop meeting that discussed details ranging widely from the immersive aspects of exhibits to where the restrooms were to be located. For my return a few weeks later, the second sentence of my notes describes the day as 'the slowest to date'. All forward momentum on the future park had ceased, and their creative energies were targeted on a promotional book intended for big-donor investors.

The grinding halt by March 2012 was all about the money required to complete construction, but more precisely it was about permits. Building regulations required that any commercial project, irrespective of its industry, be completed within a two-year timespan. If an initiated project is unable to do so, construction would be legally demanded to cease until all permits were renewed. Renewal meant months of processing time and substantial fees. For Ark Encounter to begin construction without all the finances in order would

be bad business, but the decision to wait also makes sense in religious publicity terms. An indefinite delay mid-construction would not just be embarrassing; it would de-legitimize AiG's ongoing effort to bolster the reputation of creationism. As a result, applying for permits with legally binding groundbreaking dates had to wait until all finances were secured. In December 2010, the ministry was confident that the necessary funds could be raised in a year's time. They miscalculated.

The opening of Ark Encounter dramatically marked AiG's cultural and economic power, but this structurally induced waiting marks how the process was always contingent on the ministry being an actor subject to the requirements and timelines of state regulation (Auyero 2011). There are no religious exemptions in the world of building permits. Of course, this too was made meaningful by the team. Delayed responses from government officials, unexpected wait times, lengthy applications, substantial fees: these all became fodder for how 'secular bureaucracies' fail and impede 'God's work'.

The subsequent two years were filled with multiple fundraising events and activities. The most productive was an investment bond programme that launched in the autumn of 2013. The bond was offered at two levels: a maximum of \$250,000 and a minimum of \$5,000. The ministry's promise to investors was: purchase a bond to help make Ark Encounter a reality and reap the financial reward when the park succeeds. To promote the bond, and as an adrenaline shot in the arm of AiG's religious publicity, the ministry organized a debate between Ken Ham and the pro-science, pro-evolution celebrity Bill Nye in early February 2014. The two-and-a-half-hour debate was held at the Creation Museum for an audience of 900 and live-cast online for millions of viewers. As of October 2017, the version archived on AiG's YouTube channel had received more than 6 million visitors.

The exact relation between the debate and the bond earnings is unknown; the latter is not public record. But, on 27 February 2014, AiG hosted another live webcast event: a 45-minute announcement that the necessary funding had been secured and the future of Ark Encounter was assured. Construction would begin later in the year and the park would open in summer 2016. The period of protracted uncertainty had ended and a more anticipatory waiting began.

As all this unfolded, so did my methodological journey. Much like anyone interested in issues of religion in the United States, I was intrigued by the announcement of Ark Encounter. I was further intrigued given the fact that the ministry's headquarters were located a one-hour drive from the university town where I was living and teaching, and the fact that I had just concluded a different project. My thought at the time: if I could gain access to the behind-the-scenes

production of a creationist theme park, that would be an anthropological story worth telling.

I first contacted Answers in Genesis in April 2011, and received my first reply a month later. The email came from Ark Encounter's main administrative assistant, who connected me with Mike: one of AiG's co-founders and the Ark's Chief Action Officer. I conducted an interview with Mike in late August 2011, after three months of emails and rescheduled meetings. The interview was as much about Mike acting as a gatekeeper for my ethnographic proposal as it was any questions I wanted to ask. Six weeks later, in mid-October 2011, I began my visits to the design studio.

My initial visits included lengthy boardroom meetings, where the creative team brainstormed numerous park details. I recall being impressed by the fluidity of the meetings. The team moved seamlessly from strategies of themed immersion to theological priorities to practical details, such as where restrooms and food stands should be located. I also recall the feel of halted creative momentum in spring 2012, when the opening date shifted from approximate to unknown. For the next two years, my time with the team oscillated between periods of slow, steady labour and abrupt, stressful deadlines. As I detail below, their work designing Ark Encounter could only progress so far until the budget and timeline were definite. In the meantime, they worked on other projects, from Ark promotional materials to a new Creation Museum exhibit to contracted work with another museum. In June 2014, my access to the team ended, an intense fieldwork moment I recount below. Reflecting on my experience with the team from October 2011 through to June 2014, I realize that my own waiting was an instructive part of the ethnographic process.

Creative ceiling

The creative team's labour was fundamentally altered by the fundraising delay. Initially, they were tasked with designing the entire park – the ark, Babel replica etc. Each of the core creative team members would serve as the creative director for an attraction, and they would hire other artists to work under them. With the shift to a phased opening, the team rejoined as a single collaborative unit to design the 100,000+ square feet of themed exhibit space onboard the ark. They would eventually hire a few other artists, but the phased opening allowed them to remain a small, concentrated team.

Only limited design progress could be made on Ark Encounter before the necessary funds were secured. This was a major refrain throughout my time with the team. There was a sort of creative ceiling, fixed low in place until questions of budget and timeline were finalized. I was told repeatedly that you can only dream so much as an artist before you have to rein yourself in and wait for certain pragmatics to be decided: how much money will we have for a particular exhibit, how many artists will be devoted to its completion, how much time will we have to finish before shifting to the next exhibit? As one artist described it over lunch one day, they were stuck in a ‘holding pattern.’

There is a co-dependent relationship between budget and creative labour. The money available determines numerous artistic choices, from exhibit size to the kinds of materials that can be used and what forms of technology are available. A good example is the design of the ‘pagan pathway’, as it was termed in the first design meeting I observed in November 2011. The path was initially a 20-foot wide, 1,500-foot long walkway that would lead visitors to the ark. Although a minor feature compared to the mass of exhibits planned for onboard, the path always held special importance for the team because it was the first major place where visitors would be immersed into ‘the pre-flood world of Noah.’

Details for the pathway’s design were a substantial part of team meetings in late 2011 and early 2012. From the start, the team was attentive to the fact that the pathway’s budget was limited. Their early brainstorming focused mostly on a series of objects that would variously populate the pathway, combining to depict an ‘evil society’ that God judged with death. In a February 2012 meeting, the design focus shifted to what kind of barrier would be used to form the boundaries of the pathway. Patrick suggested a series of banners and flags rising to different heights, each signifying immorality and corruption, to provide a ‘vertical visual’ effect. All applauded this idea, especially as an alternative to the possibility of a painted or decorated wall. As one artist said discouragingly, ‘A painted fence looks like a painted fence. You don’t want to defeat the experience.’

When the funding shifted from delayed to uncertain, all work on the pathway stopped. They had a definite theme – depicting the ‘pagan wickedness’ of the pre-Flood world – but without a budget or a timeline, the question of how to realize that vision could not be answered. By late autumn 2013, the bond offering had introduced some certainty into the fundraising process and the team had returned to preliminary work for the ark. The first task for one of the artists was to revisit the pathway. The

new idea was to focus only on objects that would sit on the path. The artist designed six stele monuments, eight to ten feet tall, that would ‘tell the story’ of pre-flood life, from creation in the Garden of Eden to the sinful world of Noah’s day.

By June 2014, the stele approach was decided against and they were back to a painted mural on a wall lining the pathway. Eventually, the team resigned themselves to the fact that they did not have the necessary budget or time for the pathway at all. Instead, the painted mural would need to go inside the ark as part of a Deck Two exhibit that visibly and audibly portrays the progression from creation to the flood. As you approach the mural (see Figure 5.3), the soundscape shifts to a collage of choreographed noises: sacrificial killing, yelling, raging fires, hedonistic cheering, and sword fighting.

I wonder now whether the team was disappointed with the decision for a mural and the eventual elimination of the pathway altogether. I wonder too if the nearly two-year period of protracted uncertainty disturbed the team’s creative momentum and energy. Without the stalled interruption, could they have imagined a more engaging alternative? After all, ‘a painted fence looks like a painted fence’. Did waiting produce a creative product that did not fully satisfy the team’s expectations for immersive entertainment?



Figure 5.3 Pre-flood mural at Ark Encounter. Photo by author

In the cubicle

From October 2011 through to June 2014, the ethnographic backbone of my fieldwork was the team's daily creative labour: spending mornings and afternoons at the design studio while they drew freehand, illustrated concept art, worked with raw materials, sketched exhibit schematics, edited and critiqued each other's work-in-progress. I talked with the artists at their cubicles, took notes during planned and impromptu team meetings, listened to lunchtime work talk and photographed the ubiquitous art sitting on tables, hanging on walls and torn up in trash cans. I arranged semi-structured interviews with team members, but the majority of audio-recordings and field notes addressed the work of a small team working from small desks: usually tedious, frequently under deadline, ever-conscious of budgetary constraints and constantly seeking the next imaginative breakthrough.

The very fact of being granted access to the making of a multi-million-dollar creationist theme park is flush with excitement. In first imagining this project, I envisioned sometimes raucous team meetings, debating design ideas and witnessing the rush of creative exploration. Much to my delight, my time at the studio in late 2011/early 2012 included several such meetings. Truth being stranger than fiction, the reality of the matter was more interesting than my imaginings. Perhaps not as raucous, the meetings were intense and replete with fascinating elements.

Then came the uncertainty. There were still team meetings, but they had been drained of all urgency. There were plenty of deadlines, but they were for finishing promotional materials, not finalizing an exhibit for installation on the ark. My fieldwork days became dominated by one particular form of research labour: sitting next to the artists in their cubicles while they worked. On average, I spent four to five hours at the studio each visit. A great deal of this was spent waiting: for the right moment to ask questions, for private meetings to finish so I could follow up, for artists to return from running errands. When I first arrived at the studio, I was given only one condition. Do not impede anyone's work. I took this seriously, knowing that my continued access to the team was dependent on not being perceived as a distracting nuisance. Always cautious about disturbing their progress, I would sit silently as they worked. I never quite perfected the skill of selecting the right opportunity to ask about the creative labour happening in the moment. I did find that waiting for print jobs to finish or, even better, waiting for large computer files to back up, provided useful openings.

The truth is that my fieldwork at the design studio involved significant experiences of boredom. Rather than the productive confusion that ethnographers champion as central to the process of learning and socialization, conducting research in this setting entailed the stilling and slowing of space-time (Anderson 2004). When not actively engaging the team in talk about their art, I took a lot of pictures, browsed bookshelves and read any materials they were able and willing to share (e.g. art books they were consulting for a project, preliminary scripts for an exhibit). Still, substantial time was left to wait and the space for waiting was confined to a few places in the studio. Eventually, I decided boredom was an unavoidable experience. I never liked it, sometimes dreaded it on the hour-long drive to the studio, bemoaned it on the hour-long drive home, and frequently felt awkward in the midst of it – but I learned to accept it.

This description likely rings true for anyone who has conducted ethnographic fieldwork. Malinowski's diary and countless other volumes report 'long periods of boredom occasionally punctuated by events that broke the monotony' (Chung 2009: 65). However, unlike some other accounts of ethnographic boredom, the waiting I experienced was not a byproduct of everyday life or an instrumental component of ritual action (Sjørlsev 2013). It was a necessary form of action, a dull discipline that I dedicated myself to in order for my status not to flirt with what I wanted most to avoid: being a distraction.

Another form of waiting I experienced during 43 months with the team was the anxious waiting for my ethnographic access to be revoked. This finally happened in June 2014 (see 'Calling it quits' below), but prior to this I half-expected every return to the studio to be my last. This motivated me, even more so than previous ethnographic projects, to capture as many details as humanly possible on every visit; hang on every word, take as many pictures as possible, be as fully engaged in every fieldwork moment as possible. I realized after a while that the team was also waiting for me. Journalists regularly pass through the studio, and the team is overly familiar with being interviewed once and then being written about soon after, often in a register of merciless, mocking criticism. Despite my attempts to explain how ethnography was different, it was only my continued presence that convinced the team that I was not akin to just another journalist passing through. I recall arriving at the studio one morning, six months or so into the fieldwork, and being greeted with the surprised comment, 'James, you're back!' As more time unfolded, the team asked me one question more than any other: 'When are you going to write something?'

Idle hands

When Ark Encounter's fundraising slowed to a crawl in spring 2012, and the park's opening was delayed indefinitely, the team's labour changed. It did not stop. The feverish atmosphere I first encountered around the studio in autumn 2011 evaporated, but the work never paused.

Through mid-autumn 2012, they completed a series of projects that were much more about fundraising than advancing the team's vision for the park. For example, they spent six months drafting, editing and finalizing a 60-page, glossy printed promotional booklet that presented the basic rationale for Ark Encounter, outlined the design of the three decks, presented concept art for major exhibits and explained how the ark expanded the religious publicity of the Creation Museum. The primary audience for the promotional book was committed creationists; or, more precisely, financially flush and/or generous creationists. For the team, the promotional book exemplified the problem of the creative ceiling. It helped clarify the overall vision for the three decks and flagged a few potential design problems, but none of the exhibits could be anything more than a rough, conceptual sketch.

From November 2012 through to May 2013, their work shifted away from Ark Encounter in two directions. First, they were tasked with creating a new exhibit for the Creation Museum welcome portico in time for the summer 2013 tourist season. The exhibit, 'Dragon Legends', was a colourful, eight-case display of the creationist argument that the presence of dragon tales around the world is a proof that humans and dinosaurs coexisted (Bielo 2016b) (see Figure 5.4).

The two artists who primarily created Dragon Legends described it as a helpful artistic break from their creative labour with the ark. 'It's a more playful, fun thing; just a fun, expressive way to tell stories,' one of the artists explained. He contrasted this with Ark Encounter, which he described as 'hyper-realism', offering fewer opportunities to 'go stylized'.

The second direction was some contracted labour. As they had done several times in the past, the team accepted an offer to complete work from an outside business. In this case, it was a creationist-owned natural science museum in Alabama that wanted to completely redesign their facility. A large project in its own right, the team accepted it on the condition that Ark Encounter was the team's first priority once the funding was secured. As long-time supporters of AiG, the Alabama museum owners agreed.

Along with this steady stream of projects, the team avoided the problem of idle hands by consuming some creative inspiration together. For example, they



Figure 5.4 Example of Dragon Legends display case at the Creation Museum. Photo by author

travelled to other museums and attractions to collect design ideas and make observations about practical choices to mimic or avoid regarding park amenities. In May 2012, they returned to one of their favourite sites, the Lincoln Museum in Springfield, Illinois. When I saw them at the studio the next day, they were full of renewed enthusiasm. Patrick described it as ‘the best museum out there, period’. He added how this trip was especially good for reminding them to keep their focus on ‘the so what’ of the Noah story. ‘The flood was an event in history, but so what, who cares?’ Answering his rhetorical question, Patrick continued by stressing the creationist claim of a common ancestry that traces to Noah and his family: ‘none of us would be here if it weren’t for Noah’. He closed by returning to the question of park design, and how to use ‘the so what’ to create a memorable experience, ‘to make a linear row of boxes interesting’.

The team headed for their cubicles when the meeting ended. Before they began the day’s labour, I asked the three main artists what they gleaned from revisiting the Lincoln Museum. For one artist, it was a time-lapse display that depicted the Civil War’s unfolding, complete with a rising death toll and battle locations. Another focused on the experience as a whole rather than a single exhibit, and how successfully the Lincoln Museum ‘told the story visually,

mostly without words'. This echoed a regular critique the team voiced of their previous work on the Creation Museum. They all wanted Ark Encounter to rely less on textual signage to teach, and more on the embodied experience of being in a designed space. Finally, I asked if visitors needed to have much background knowledge about the Civil War to fully appreciate the museum. Together, two artists immediately said 'no', the Lincoln Museum does a beautiful job of teaching to the broadest possible public. They reflected that this is one of their key commitments with Ark Encounter. They want all visitors, no matter what their biblical literacy might be, to be equally engaged.

Calling it quits

Throughout my fieldwork with the team I never lost a sense of anxious waiting. I never stopped wondering when they might decide to sever my ethnographic access. This anxiety dissipated a bit in late autumn 2013 after Patrick and I had a frank conversation. The bond programme was in full swing and the ministry was hopeful that it would deliver the needed funds. Following an interview in his office, Patrick informed me that my fieldwork could not continue in its current form once the funding was secure. The team would be too busy and even minor distractions in the studio could disturb the creative process. In turn, we outlined an agreement for how my fieldwork could continue, primarily focusing on collective team meetings. I left the meeting feeling assured.

Then, in June 2014, it happened. I suspected as much from the email exchange that led up to the visit. The reply from the administrator came within a few hours, which had never happened before. It read only: 'Monday June 30 at 2pm will work for us. You will be meeting with Patrick. If you have any questions just let me know.' My suspicions were confirmed when I arrived. Patrick stood to welcome me in his office and closed the door behind us; he had never done this before.

After a few pleasantries, Patrick moved swiftly to his purpose: 'we have to call it quits'. It was certain, even stern. Before I could respond, he added that this extended to team meetings; everything. I reminded him of our discussion a few months prior and asked what had changed. He did not really acknowledge the previous agreement, just continued that it was too much effort to involve 'an outside person', and that the meetings were 'private'. The decision was clearly final, non-negotiable. We talked for nearly another hour, Patrick updating me on their progress since my last visit and their plans

for moving forward. It was difficult to concentrate. I was upset and even embarrassed, like a romantic partner who breaks up with you with no chance to defend yourself or appeal your case. He walked me to the door, another first in 43 months, and wished me well.

The drive home was a chaos of emotion. In the subsequent days, I realized I was wrestling with at least four distinct feelings. I was angry with Patrick for dismissing our earlier agreement. I was disappointed; my research design of following the team's work from beginning to end was cut short. Strangely, I was relieved. The difficulties of the fieldwork had become cumbersome: visits cancelled at the last minute; arriving to the studio only to find most of the team not there for one reason or another; the tedium, awkwardness and boredom of sitting in the cubicles. A burden I had learned to embrace was suddenly gone, and it was freeing. If I was not *allowed* to be there again, that meant I would not ever *have* to be there again. Tagging alongside relief, was guilt. I had dedicated a lot of time to this fieldwork; feeling relieved felt a bit shameful. In any case, the other shoe had finally dropped and one period of waiting was over.

God's time

Another refrain that punctuated my fieldwork resonates deeply with fundamentalism more broadly. Throughout the months of uncertainty, team members imbued the process of waiting with sacred meaning by reminding themselves and each other that the funds would come through 'in God's time'. As time passed and the waiting became indefinite, the team began to question when and how the funding would be secured, although, apart from the rare moment like Patrick's in the opening vignette, they remained committed to the hope that the project would eventually materialize.

Charismatic Christians are known for the tremendous energy they devote to discerning and bringing their own will into alignment with God's will (Bialecki 2016). American fundamentalists put less work into discerning and more into 'submitting' to God's will. Part of this submission process is figuring out what forms of agency are available to them as committed believers; what they can do as faithful people that will demonstrate trust and submission. For the team, this meant continuing their creative labour, designing promotional materials and completing other projects. God would deliver the money when 'He' was ready; in the meantime, and in preparation for God's timing, they had work to do. In this way, uncertain waiting became an opportunity for the team to

live in proper fundamentalist dispositions. Doubt became fertile soil for faith (Pelkmans 2013).

During morning prayer meetings, as asides in the middle of work talk, and during lunchtime conversations I heard slight variations on the same theme: Ark Encounter is 'in God's hands', and it will happen (or not) according to 'His will, not ours'. In October 2012, I rode with two of the artists to eat lunch at a nearby sushi restaurant. On the way, I asked about a large donation that had been mentioned during the morning meeting. In an excited tone of awe, they described how an older woman delivered a cheque, completely unannounced, for \$300,000 earlier that week. She was not a regular contributor to AiG, she just wanted to support Ark Encounter. They framed the woman and her gift as a reminder from God to 'be patient' and 'shut up'. Rather than complain about the stalled fundraising, they should use their creative labour to do their part and trust God to deliver the rest. Patience – like boredom and hope, endurance and uncertainty – is yet another experiential register of waiting. For the team, patience is a performance of faith, a form of agency in which they become ideal Christian subjects who, remembering Proverbs 3, trust in the Lord with all their heart and lean not on their own understanding.

As they waited, tried to trust God's timing over their own and scanned their lifeworlds for reminders, they recreated another familiar fundamentalist pattern. Just as Noah continued building the ark and waited patiently for the promised storm, the team continued their creative labour and waited for the flood of investment dollars. The fundamentalist practice of locating themselves in scripture and elaborating on the connections between themselves and biblical characters is well established. Most notably, Susan Harding (2000: 231– 234) closely analysed how Jerry Falwell's rhetorical poetics were built on this kind of typological hermeneutic. Falwell placed himself in the drama of scripture, and asked his audiences to listen to him as a modern type of biblical voice.

The creative team understands Ark Encounter in much the same way: not as a fulfilment of prophecy, but as a re-enactment of Christian truth. Just like the ancient heroes of biblical tradition, and the icons of modern fundamentalism, Ark Encounter will testify to the authority of scripture and the moral-spiritual value of creationism. This commitment was always available for impromptu elaboration, for new ways to reassert who they are, what they are doing, and why the realized vision was worth the wait. For example, I arrived at the studio one morning in March 2012 to find the team seated around the boardroom table, talking casually after a short morning meeting. The conversation turned to a new 'documentary' that would be released in limited theatres at the end of

the month: *Monumental*, starring Kirk Cameron, a handsome celebrity face of contemporary fundamentalism. The lead administrative assistant encouraged everyone to see the film and tell others to do the same. Cameron funded the film himself and if it grossed a certain dollar amount a major media company would purchase the rights and distribute the film nationally. *Monumental* repackages the typical fundamentalist narrative that America is in a moral and spiritual freefall. In response to a summary of the film by one of the administrative assistants, Patrick described America as 'done', citing public schools as a prime example. Jon and Kristen seemed to want a more hopeful tone, adding that 'God is sovereign' and 'everything will work out for the glory of God and for God's people.' Undeterred, Patrick continued that American Christians never talk about 'revival' and are failing to be any different than those causing the moral decline. To close, he reminded the team that *Monumental's* essential purpose rhymed with Ark Encounter's: 'That's why what we're doing is so important. It's going to be this weird little beacon of hope to remind people that we are different.' With that, the team dispersed to their cubicles.

To wait in a way that performs trust in God and submission to God's will includes paying attention to God's reminders. Waiting was at times frustrating and anxiety provoking for the team, but it also created opportunities to witness God working. It was an active form of waiting, using the strategy of scanning everyday life for signs of divine presence and action. A premier example is the narrative that God brought these specific individuals together for the purpose of building the AiG empire of religious publicity. This narrative was performed in front of 900 people at the 'Hammer and Peg Ceremony', a celebratory event in early May 2014 held at the Creation Museum. The all-day event brought together Ark personnel, AiG board members, local politicians and donors as a kind of ceremonial groundbreaking. Following presentations on the development of Ark Encounter, donors were bussed from the museum to the Ark property so they could walk around the building site.

The presentations included an onstage discussion between Ken Ham and Patrick. Ham acted as interviewer, while Patrick fielded questions about the exhibits visitors could expect. To introduce Patrick, Ham told a story about a different period of waiting, the thirteen years between the founding of AiG and the opening of the museum. During this time Ham 'prayed for God to deliver someone' who was capable of designing the museum. That someone turned out to be Patrick, who was hired in the autumn of 2001, just after the groundbreaking. Ham jokingly recalled how Patrick informed them that they had done everything backward: securing a building before finalizing the plan. 'We're not doing that

again,' Patrick assured the audience to an appreciative laugh. Ham added: 'This time, more design, less evolution,' a bit of creationist speech play that the audience happily devoured.

As their interview progressed, Ham asked Patrick about the artists he had assembled to design Ark Encounter. Patrick lauded the team, describing them as 'wonderful' and that he 'couldn't do it without them.' He noted assuredly that 'God provided' each and every one of the artists. Again, Ham was ready with a crowd-pleasing creationist quip: 'As God brought the animals to Noah.'

Conclusion

This chapter has explored how protracted uncertainty and anticipatory waiting in the making of a creationist theme park were filled with action and meaning. Ultimately, the observations made here aim to complement this volume's broader effort to foster a comparative anthropology of waiting. In particular, I hope to have advanced an approach to waiting as a phenomenologically rich and agentic process. Like Hage (2009) and Brun (2015), amongst others, the waiting experienced by the Ark Encounter team was active in multiple ways. I argued that the interplay of questioning of how 'God's plan' will unfold, fundamentalist dispositions and creative labour were central to the team's experience of waiting. This complements other scholarship on the social life of doubt, namely the capacity of doubt to breed faithful commitment (Pelkmans 2013). With respect to the latter, my aim has been to draw out some ways in which waiting is coupled to the production of religious publicity. While the team was at the mercy of a broader ministry, donors and political-economic conditions, their focus remained on how their creative labour could promote and help bring about Ark Encounter's eventual realization. All religious publicity emerges from contexts of production (Engelke 2013). As we continue to trace how religious publicity is produced, the Ark team's experience will help remind us that the forms of waiting that punctuate production processes are revealing and worthy of attention in their own right.

With respect to my fieldwork, waiting was a pivotal component of the ethnographic experience. There were certainly frustrations involved with doing this particular species of ethnography, but it is also true that waiting likely enabled this fieldwork to exist at all. I hope other ethnographers, particularly those working in contexts of cultural production, will benefit from the reflections about how I waited, the conditions of my waiting, and the methodological and reflexive value that is available in analysing waiting.

The forms of waiting examined here echo some of the central contributions to this volume. Waiting is not an empty form of temporality, but can be integral to processes of becoming. Waiting is not necessarily lacking action, but can itself be a form of social practice comprised of multiple forms of doing. Moreover, one form of waiting can be closely linked with other forms of waiting, and their meanings and affects are intertwined with one another. While waiting is defined by its status as an in-between experience, it can also be much more. Waiting can reflect the structural conditions it emerges from and into; work as a register for performing religious dispositions; and, be a form of experiential action integral to the craft of ethnographic fieldwork.

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Waiting for Nothing: Nihilism, Doubt and Difference without Difference in Post-Revolutionary Georgia

Martin Demant Frederiksen

Introduction

In late 2015, a Tbilisi-based artist posts a statement online concerning an attack that had recently taken place in the capital of the Republic of Georgia against Campus Studio. This was a space where students, artists and architects had been meeting for a series of different events, including artist talks and discussions of a range of various theoretical texts and perspectives. The statement read as follows:

Since many of the lectures drew between 100 and 150 people, Campus Studio used loudspeakers, so that the audience could hear the lecture on the street and in the yard. During one of the lectures Nietzsche's quotation 'God is dead' could be heard on the streets. This apparently caused some of the neighbors to believe Campus Studio to be a meeting space for satanic gatherings, luring young adults and children. On November 15 three young adults from the neighborhood interrupted a lecture and one attacked co-founder and director Misha Khundadze with a knife. With serious lung injuries and blood loss, Misha survived after an extensive operation and days in intensive care. All this happened, once again, in the name of faith and religion. Not only has the Georgian Orthodox Church fueled hatred and ignorance, but the government has been looking away over the past when crimes in the name of Georgian Orthodoxy have been committed, ridiculing the secular aim manifested in the country's constitution (Concept and Theory – Tbilisi 2015).

The 'once again' in the text refers to a series of violent attacks having taken place in the Republic of Georgia in recent years against individuals or groups

condemned by the Georgian Orthodox Church. Some of these were carried out in the name of the Church by fanatic followers, some were officially condoned by the Church, and some were carried out by orthodox priests themselves.¹ For local clergy in Georgia, nihilist tendencies have long been seen as a highly problematic phenomena coinciding with other 'subcultures' not fitting into the worldview of the Church, and believed these to cause a serious moral problem for the country and its population. This stems from the perspective that believing in something lies at the very basis of what constitutes a human being; not believing, whether as an atheist or a nihilist, inevitably renders a person un-human² and devoid of morality (Frederiksen 2015). Yet the people who had gathered in and around Campus Studio during the event that caused the attack were not necessarily either nihilists or satanists; they were simply discussing Nietzsche, as they had been discussing many other theorists.

My own original interest in nihilism in Georgia started some years prior to this event when Natia, an old friend living in Tbilisi, noted to me during a conversation that 'everyone I know is a nihilist'. We had originally been talking about atheism, but Natia assured me that when people were talking about no longer believing, about 'everything being nothing' (*kvelaperi araperia*) and about senses of disengagement, such statements were rarely directed against the Georgian Orthodox Church. Rather, she said, they were directed against local politics. And indeed, nihilism has been depicted by several local politicians themselves as being a major societal disease in contemporary Georgia (e.g. Chigoev 2011). When the formerly relatively unknown businessman Bidzina Ivanishvili entered Georgian politics in 2011 by launching the new opposition party 'Georgian Dream' (*kartuli ots'neba*), he declared that one of his reasons for doing so was that 'there is nihilism ingrained in [Georgian] people. With my appearance on the stage, people have hope' (Doward 2011). Particularly young people, it was held, were increasingly disengaging from social and political life. A decade earlier the so-called Rose Revolution had taken place in the country,³ and the question of youth disengagement was perceived as potentially threatening the democratic ideals and hopeful visions of a new future for the country originally underlying this revolution. These ideals entailed, among other things, the consolidation of civil society, eradication of corruption and strengthened ties to the EU and US, moves towards something believed to be both better than and different from the chaotic post-Soviet period of the 1990s where Georgia had been stumbling to find its feet as an independent nation. Yet, in the years following the revolution it soon became clear that many of these ideals either proved difficult to achieve in practice, or that they did not necessarily entail the

changes envisioned as once achieved. This chapter explores how, in individual experiences, revolution and politics in Georgia have often come to be seen as the very opposite of such revolutionary ideals – namely as ‘difference without difference’.

Religious fear of ‘nothing’ is not something particular to Georgia – it is a fear that has a long history in the wider world (Barrow 2001; Green 2011). Nor is political fear of nothing and nihilism something we find only here. Yet, it does seem to have had a heightened salience in Georgia in the period following the Rose Revolution in the sense that, as I will argue, politicians increasingly partook in creating their own horror: citizens who simply did not care, who saw changes as not entailing any difference, and who came to hold that there was nothing to wait for no matter how increasingly grand the promises made by politicians became. Focusing mainly on a group of self-declared nihilists, I discuss in the following pages what is entailed in the shift from waiting for *something* to waiting for *nothing in particular*. What is at stake, I ask, in the creation of a poetics of waiting without a telos? And what happens to the poetics of waiting when we displace our focus from looking at ‘waiting for *something* to change’ to looking at ‘waiting for *nothing* to change’? I approach waiting here as a lack of narrative that may come to form a permanent present (Johnson-Hanks 2014). In the theoretical discussion of the questions posed above, I draw mainly on Mladen Dolar’s reading of Samuel Beckett, an author for whom both ‘nothing’ and ‘waiting’ were central (if not *the* central) themes of his writings.

A note on difference

Before we enter the smoke-filled rooms of indifference that make up the empirical part of the chapter, I want to spend some time on the question of ‘difference’, which is of central importance to my overall discussion. For this I turn to a recent piece by Sarah Green in which she traces the epistemological logics of geographical borders and the rules for establishing a difference between a ‘here’ and a ‘there’. Based on the case of two uninhabited Aegean islands and the dispute between Greece and Turkey about which country these islands belong to, Green notes that:

there are different ways of making sense of the meaning of the ‘here’ as opposed to ‘elsewhere’, and these methods often coexist in the same space. This simple condition – the coexistence of different border regimes, each of which uses a

different logic to establish the meaning of places – inevitably makes grey zones, ambiguities and uncertainties at the interface between border regimes (Green 2015: 182).

What is at stake here is two different places coexisting within the same uninhabited geographical space. Under normal circumstances, this difference does not make a difference – the islands are more or less just a gathering of rocks in the sea that no one really pays attention to. But at one point a Turkish cargo ship ran aground on one of them and the captain subsequently refused the assistance of a Greek coastguard because the island, in the captain's perspective, was Turkish territory and it should therefore be the Turkish coastguard coming to assistance. Now, suddenly, the difference suddenly began to make a difference.

In her account, Green outlines a paradox of border-making; a situation where the drawing of borders, which is usually perceived as an act of creating clarity, ends up creating anything but clarity. In other words, rather than removing ambiguity of what is here and what is there, differences within epistemological logics underlying the making borders may end up as grey zones where 'heres' and 'theres' begin to intermingle or overlap. The overall question, then, is when does a difference begin to make a difference? (Green 2015: 175). And what is the role of doubt, along with related notions of temporality, waiting and crises of meaning, in the potential outcomes of this question?

What is at stake in the empirical context I am going to unfold shortly is of course not a question of physical borders. Hence, the cue I want to take from Green is an analytical one in terms of the relation between a difference that makes a difference and a difference that does not make a difference, and the doubts, ambiguities and uncertainties involved in this relation. Moreover, I will analytically 'flip' the question of difference as put forth by Green by arguing that doubt and ambiguity may just as well arise when difference does not make a difference, that is, when societal change ceases to be seen as changing anything.

Revolutionary difference

There are few other words that symbolize the notion of 'difference' as strongly as that of 'revolution'. If anything, revolutionary hope is premised on a telos of change; an event that is expected to potentially render a given society either partly or completely different from what it was before, and a notion that has

been central in the unfolding of politics in the modern world (Arendt 2006; Magun 2013; Scott 2014). For many, both locally and internationally, the Rose Revolution taking place in Georgia in November 2003 was initially seen as exactly this; a telos of change. As thousands of people in Tbilisi went onto the streets and eventually entered parliament, there was clear anticipation about what they wanted to be different. During the preceding twelve years of independence from the Soviet Union, the Georgian nation had been a site of civil wars, corrupt officials, infrastructural breakdowns and a political scene marked by continuous turmoil (Dudwick 2002). Moreover, not only was this revolution an apparently clear-cut break with a previous government and mode of politics, it was also seen on a larger scale (at least from the West) as symbolizing a break with the failed-state syndrome that had marked several new nations in post-Soviet Eastern Europe. Liberal democracy was finally on the rise (Frederiksen and Gotfredsen 2017), and Georgia was, at least ostensibly, to become a textbook example of developing good governance and transparency (Gotfredsen 2015).

The new government that was subsequently elected in early 2004 was led by one of the leaders of the revolution, Mikhail Saakashvili. Neither he nor his fellow government officials were shy of highlighting the significance of the revolution and the difference it represented (Frederiksen 2013; Dunn and Frederiksen 2014). The task ahead of them of course now was that they actually had to prove that this difference would really make a difference. Expectations were high, the president had given many something to hope for that now had to be turned into reality. And from the very beginning there were changes certainly being made, often quite dramatic ones. While some operated mainly on a symbolic level through iconoclastic measures such as changing street names, changing the flag and removing or substituting statues (Manning 2007; Frederiksen 2013), others were initiated through reform processes. These included alterations within sectors such as healthcare (Schecter 2011; Koch 2013), state and institution-building (Aliyev 2014), social security (Frederiksen 2014) and anti-corruption (Di Puccio 2014), to name but a few. The reform processes were measures seeking to ensure that people once again had something to hope for, that politicians and the political system could be trusted, that things were (or would be) changing for the better. All of this supported by a political rhetoric seeking to convey to the population that they no longer had to wait for the future – the future was already there, what the population had hoped for was already happening.

Everything changes while staying the same

While (potential) change was highly visible on the surface of Georgian society – traces of ‘something happening’ being everywhere – there were also places where nothing was happening, and there people who had increasingly grown tired of the ‘something’ that was going on.

It is late August 2012 and I am walking around with Vano and Paata, trying to find a place to hang out. They had been recently banned from their regular café, an ad hoc bar based in a partly demolished building in the city centre. Vano and Paata had been getting into too many fights lately, either with each other or with other guests, and the staff had grown tired of it. I had been with them on one such occasion, about six months earlier. Vano had gotten into an argument with a man who had ended up smashing a bottle on Vano’s head, the latter refusing to go to the hospital with the constant claim that ‘it’s nothing, it’s nothing’ (*araperia*), despite him having an open wound in his neck and splinters of glass down his back.

On this day in August, we have been walking around for a good while. It is late in the afternoon and the heat is excruciating. We have had a few beers in a park, calling some people to find out whether they have a place where we can stay during the evening. Vano detests the idea of going to a regular bar or café – they all have some idiotic decor, he sighs; pastiches of either ‘traditional Georgia’, with their brick walls, wooden furniture and polyphonic singing on the stereo, or ‘some retro-Buddha-art shit’. New cafés and bars have been popping up like mushrooms in recent years, mainly in the newly renovated parts of the city’s Old Town district that, in Vano’s view, now looks more like a set from a Disney movie than a place where people live.

Paata calls a guy he recently met, Beqa, and we are invited to come to his place. Beqa’s apartment is located in the northernmost part of the Mtatsminda neighbourhood, close to the Old Town but still a place no politician had yet thought of renovating at the time. ‘A bad neighbourhood,’ Vano notes while we are climbing the steep stairs to reach the door. ‘A lot of crime here, and people who are crazy. But then, most of my own friends are as well.’ He tells the story of how one time, while Paata was walking down Rustaveli Avenue in the city centre, a random guy had yelled ‘gay’ at him, maybe because of the way he dresses, and Paata had taken out a knife and cut him – not killing him, Vano says, but still causing some injury. ‘He likes to cut in stuff, but you already know that,’ he concludes as we reach our destination. A pair of drowsy eyes partly covered by wild and messy hair appear from behind the door. Beqa lets us in. He

lives here with his sister, who joins us once in a while in the evening, and a small black dog. The apartment is largely empty, with small rundown rooms. There is a couch, a few chairs and a small table in the living room, but no other furniture. A few pages from a Swedish magazine have been taped to one of the walls. I ask Beqa why they have hung them there. 'Not really for any reason,' he says. None of them can read what it says. Beqa finds an assortment of small glasses in different shapes and colours and Vano takes out the vodka, soda and grape juice that we bought before coming. Cigarette packs are thrown on the table along with an ashtray and someone puts on music. The heat is still stifling and we slowly melt into our chairs, drinking without toasting, listening to music, smoking and chatting. All windows are open but there is no wind and cigarette smoke hangs still in the air.

At some late hour of the night, Paata and I begin discussing politics. Parliamentary elections are coming up. The president at this point in time is still Mikhail Saakashvili but his party United National Movement stands to lose to Georgian Dream, led by the challenger Bidzina Ivanishvili. I did not know much about Ivanishvili's political standpoint but I knew Saakashvili, and had been writing about the drawbacks of his grand political visions and how they were implemented. Paata says that he is going to vote for Saakashvili. I ask him why and a minor discussion starts. Paata notes that Saakashvili 'already filled his pockets', and if a new president and political party come to power 'it would not change anything anyway, just as the last change of power didn't'. Although the political scene changes, politics is as stale as the air of the room we are sitting in. There are differences but they do not make a difference. I do not think much of it: everyone discusses politics in Georgia, even though no one ever finds politics worth discussing,⁴ so it seems harmless. Paata gets a bit agitated at one point but the conversation soon drifts into something else. My participation ends a few hours later, not because of that particular discussion but because I, like everyone else, am getting drunk and tired. Vano wants to be sure that I make it home safely, and he has a feeling, he confides to me by dragging me slightly aside, that Paata will soon punch someone. Probably Vano himself or Beqa; they always get into fights, but I should go home before it happens. So I leave.

I did not see Paata again for almost a year, until May 2013. The first thing Paata did when we met again was to apologize. I had no idea why. 'For the discussion about politics we had last time we saw each other,' he said. I confided that although I remembered it, I had not given it much thought. Still, Paata said, he was sorry about it. He had not meant to make a point about anything – I should not take it as him actually having a stance towards, or caring about,

politics – he had just been drunk. And so we went along the street to find a place to buy a bottle we could empty. I remember thinking that this was probably the closest Paata and I had ever come to having a conversation about something that related to the socio-political context we were in. Surely, it was a conversation that negated the importance of this context, but still. I also thought that perhaps we now knew each other well enough for him to randomly punch me later that evening, as he did his other friends. But it was Paata, would it matter? I had known Vano, Paata and their friends for years, meeting with them whenever I was in Tbilisi for fieldwork. But they had never been a focus of my research. It was when Natia told me that everyone she knew was a nihilist that I had begun to think about changing this, as I knew Natia had been among their circle at one point, which meant that there was suddenly a lot of things about Vano and Paata that began to make sense. Or rather, there was a senselessness that suddenly stood forth as a potential realm worthy of inquiry. So I would return again in the spring of 2014, spending months doing nothing with Vano, Paata and their friends, only this time with their nothingness and disengagement as the focus of my work. Our time together became one of randomness, repetition, negations, sighs, seclusions, fights, lazy afternoons, weekends doing nothing, Greenaway, Morrissey, Tarkovsky, Kerouac, unintelligible conversations, and then all of it once more (Frederiksen 2016).

We were, however, not together all the time. Some had to go to work, others to their classes at university or to their art studios. During these periods I would visit other old friends in the city and the subject of my research would often come up in conversations. On one occasion I visited my former landlady Marina, who was hosting a lunch for some of her friends. There are no overfilled ashtrays here, no loud music, no fights, no sighs. Instead there are Easter decorations on the table along with an assortment of homemade traditional food. There is chatter everywhere, a moderate amount of good wine, vast amounts of laughing, joking, dessert and coffee. Sitting next to me is Marina's friend Nona who is intrigued by my interest in nothingness and nihilism. 'You know,' she says, 'we're obsessed with nothing here, it's all there is, it's all we talk about.' At this point, Bidzina Ivanishvili's party had won national elections and Mikhail Saakashvili had fallen from power. But that did not seem to have changed anything, at least not from Nona's perspective. Everything was the same; there was still a lot of nothing going on.

Elizabeth Dunn has observed a similar preoccupation with the notion of 'nothing' in the Georgian IDP⁵ settlements in which she conducted fieldwork (Dunn 2014). Here, people would describe to her how they 'had nothing' and how

‘nothing was being done’ and nothingness became, Dunn writes, a central category through which IDPs understood their lives, their relationships to the state and to the international community (Dunn 2014: 288). Despite the fact that I had initially thought nihilism to be found only in the smoke-filled rooms of my primary fieldsite, nothingness could thus not necessarily be confined to Paata, Vano and their friends; it also existed as sentiments among IDPs, and in political discussions around lunch tables. In different configurations, it seemed to somehow permeate aspects of the lives of a range of different individuals and groups in the country. It was not so surprising, then, that Natia had told me that everyone she knew was a nihilist. And Ivanishvili may thus have been right when he asserted that nihilism had become ingrained in Georgians. His problem, now after he himself became prime minister, was that the political change he had been part of initiating by talking about himself as a potential vanguard against nihilism and a new provider of hope, had not changed that situation. There had not become less of nothing.

The sun shone, having no alternative, on nothing new

There are many definitions of what nihilism is or can be.⁶ Here, we are not dealing with organized (or political) nihilism, but rather with displays of nihilist sentiments. For that reason I therefore follow Simon Critchley, via Nietzsche and Beckett, in seeing nihilism as a crisis of meaning and distrust in endpoints (Critchley 2004: 32). And it is particularly Beckett’s work that I want to pursue here in relation to the cases from Georgia presented above. Beckett has been referred to as a poet of nothingness, often exploring the relation between waiting and nothing. David Kleinberg-Levin (2015), in examining Beckett’s depictions of hope and waiting, brings our attention to the seventh book of *Texts for Nothing* in which the main character sits in a third-class waiting room of a railway station waiting for a train that will never come. Both here, as well as in *Calmative* and *Krapp’s Last Tape*,

Beckett seems implicitly to be challenging us to consider the promise of happiness *after* the Death of God and the end of religion ... Our problem, our defeat, lies in waiting, waiting interminably for that great revelation, that miraculous event of messianic or utopian transformation, suddenly erupting into our world from outside, manipulating everything to make it all just right. Perhaps not today, but on the day after tomorrow (2015: 157).

This is a condition, Kleinberg-Levin notes, that is also found in the works of Franz Kafka and W. G. Sebald. In the latter’s ‘Dr K. Takes the Waters at Riva’

a man among a group of townspeople, who are waiting for someone from an insurance company, notes how 'those in whom we invest our hopes only ever make their appearance when they are no longer needed' (quoted from Kleinberg-Levin 2015: 287).⁷

But perhaps the most well-known example of Beckett's writings on waiting and nothing is of course *Waiting for Godot* (Beckett 2011), which the critic Vivian Mercier famously depicted as a play where 'nothing happens, twice' (Green 2011: 76). Beckett was in a sense more interested in the notion of waiting than in who or what Godot is (Valentine 2009: 140). We never really learn anything about Godot in the play, the telos of those waiting remaining indistinct throughout. We might thus say that the two tramps Vladimir and Estragon are not waiting for anything specified, but for nothing in particular. In his reading of *Godot* and other novels, Mladen Dolar compares the writing style of Beckett to that of James Joyce. While Joyce, he notes, was interested in infinite addition ($n+1$), Beckett was interested in the exact opposite: subtracting meaning ($n-1$) (Dolar 2012: 51). 'One can easily imagine,' Dolar writes, 'the two writers reading their proofs, Joyce relentlessly adding new twists, and Beckett constantly crossing out, deleting scenes, paragraphs, pages. For one there is never enough, for the other there is never little enough' (Dolar 2012: 52).

Dolar goes on to insert Beckett in another literary juxtaposition that is worth taking up here, namely differences between Beckett and Jean-Paul Sartre in their respective descriptions of picking up a stone. In Beckett's novel *Molloy* (2009 [1951]) the protagonist sets up a system for sucking on stones that he finds on a beach. This is a depiction, writes Dolar, that can be seen as a response to the opening scene of Sartre's *Nausea* (2000 [1938]) in which the protagonist equally engages in the activity of picking up stones on a beach. Yet while in *Nausea* only one stone is chosen, in *Molloy* multiple stones are picked up, and whereas Sartre's hero is disgusted by the stone to the point of becoming nauseous, Beckett's hero indulges in his own disgust, putting the stones in his mouth to explore their tastelessness (Dolar 2012: 55). Although both authors are thus interested in the question of meaninglessness ($n-1$), for Sartre the meaningless and its accompanying absurdity is an existential *problem*, whereas for Beckett it is one of *indifference*: 'In Sartre the stone has no meaning, its stupid being there and inertia endow the rest of existence with a stone-like quality – the stone petrifies it and turns it into absurdity, (Dolar 2012: 55). In Beckett 'all stones taste the same, they are tasteless, indifferent', so why suck one stone rather than the other? Well, the stone is the creature of minimal difference, or the difference of the same, the difference of the indistinct, and it is the "indifferent difference" that

counts, quite literally' (Dolar 2012: 56). And so we are back to the question of difference: differences making a difference, differences not making a difference, differences that one is indifferent towards.

The tramps Vladimir and Estragon have been described by John Valentine as being nihilists in Nietzsche's precise sense of the term: 'a nihilist is not one who believes in nothing, but one who abandons belief in *this* world in favour of another world that is (according to Nietzsche) idealized, fictitious, and the product of the mechanism of *ressentiment*' (Valentine 2009: 138; emphasis in original). Dolar comes to a slightly different conclusion in his juxtaposition of Beckett against Joyce and Sartre, which highlights Beckett's constant deduction of meaning alongside descriptions of indifference towards this meaninglessness. Here, the nihilist tendency is, similarly to Valentine's observation, not an insistence on complete nothingness, but rather (and here he departs somewhat from Valentine) a gravitation away from something and towards nothing (see also Pilling 2010: 21).

Waiting for something to wait for, or waiting for nothing to change

How may we relate such gravitation towards nothing to the question of waiting? In much anthropology theorizing, waiting has been related to the question of hope – a gravitation towards *something*. As Mathijs Pelkmans has argued, 'even in the direst situations people will find new points of orientation and aspiration' (Pelkmans 2013: 3). Recent studies have furthermore linked the notion of hopefulness to questions of reciprocity and giftgiving (e.g. Hage 2003; Miyazaki 2004). Ghassan Hage has noted how a state's ability to distribute hope, for instance through the creation of particular places or scenarios, is a vital part of what makes a population trust the state. Hage describes this as 'social gifts' that enables a population to see themselves as part of a society's future (Hage 2003: 10, 146; see also Frederiksen 2013: 154ff.). Of central importance in this relation is of course that the recipient actually wants to receive this gift of hope. If not, it is simply left floating. The fact that social change rarely (if ever) takes place overnight is a delicate issue for people who have come into power due to a promise of change and a rhetoric of hope.⁸ The lack of immediate change following political promises may themselves easily translate into doubt, passivity and apathy (Bartha 2013: 220), as people lose their belief in the promises given and start waiting doubtfully for a change to come (Jansen 2015: 180).

But these perspectives still imply that waiting is related to something, it is 'not wholly purposeless' (Jeffrey 2010: 4), and that it is a waiting out of something perceived to have an eventual endpoint (Hage 2009). Waiting has a telos – there is something to wait for (or through), a horizon that creates a meantime (Sharma 2014: 52).

Stanley Cavell (2002) observes in relation to Beckett's engagement with waiting without a telos that:

suspense is for Hitchcock what faith is for the Christian, an ultimate metaphysical category, directing life's journey and making the universe come clear, and clean at the end. The overwhelming question for both is: How will the truth come out at last? Beckett's couples have discovered the final plot: that there is no plot, that the truth has come out, that *this* is the end. But they would be mad to believe it and they cannot, being human, fully give up suspense. So they wait. Not for *something*, for they know there is nothing to wait for. So they try not to wait, but they do not know how to end (2002: 132; emphasis in original).

And moreover that 'solitude, emptiness, nothingness, meaninglessness, silence – these are not the givens of Beckett's characters but their goal, their new heroic undertaking' (2002: 156).⁹ So we arrive at a central juxtaposition between the assertion that 'there is nothing here after which something will follow' (whether eschatology, teleology or utopianism) and 'there is something here of which nothing will come'. To reiterate from the previous section, in Sartre's *Nausea* we see in the main character an acknowledgement of the existence of meaninglessness in the modern world, or rather as a result of the modern world. Eventually he comes to understand his own nausea and in this there is something to move on from (Toohey 2011: 126). With Beckett there is no such movement, only continuous waiting.

As Michael Flaherty has argued, people often find ways of 'filling in the otherwise "empty" intervals that stretch between what we have and what we want' (Flaherty 2011: 26). But the problem arises when there is nothing to wait for, but one is still waiting. Here we are not dealing with a question of existential doubt (as in Sartre) or a quest to add something different or more (as in Joyce), but of an acceptance of indifference.¹⁰ Waiting in the empirical context outlined previously, then, is not a question of uncertainty or doubt, but actually one of relative certainty; not doubting that difference might or might not make a difference but feeling certain that it will not. Not only that *something* will not happen, but that *nothing* will happen, leaving nothing the only thing to wait for. This kind of gravitation towards nothing is not something devoid of pleasure, as Beckett showed in many of his works (Weller 2010: 111). And indeed, a lot may

be happening while nothing is happening; people have Easter lunch, or listen to music, or walk around, or get into fights. The defining feature is that all of this is going on in a context where things are being regarded as nothing, whether it be political reforms or having a bottle of vodka smashed against one's head, where there is a distrust in end-points and a crisis of meaning, where there is no point in getting so drunk that you begin to discuss politics because politics never makes a point.

A local friend had previously noted to me how Georgia was an REM-State; a place of rapid-eye-movement where 'everything is changing and still staying the same' (Frederiksen 2014: 320). She herself was from an IDP family and was, in her own words, 'waiting indefinitely' to return to her home in the Autonomous Republic Abkhazia, from where her family had fled in the mid-1990s. But due to the political stalemate in the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia she was sure that this return would never happen, that nothing would ever change, yet she still waited for it. Returning to the border dispute between Greece and Turkey described by Sarah Green, we may thus say that in Georgia too we find an overlap of competing epistemologies coexisting within the same space: a political one claiming that changes are taking place that are creating changes – differences that make a difference whether now or in the future – and a societal one claiming that changes are taking place without these actually changing anything either now or in the future, differences not making a difference. Returning also to Mladen Dolar, we may further say that in waiting for nothing to change the only change or difference possible is that of *nothing itself* changing (Dolar 2012: 61).

Nothing more

He who has waited long enough will wait forever. And there comes the hour when nothing more can happen and all is ended but the waiting that knows itself in vain, Samuel Beckett, *Malone Dies* (quoted from Kleinberg-Levin 2015).

For Nietzsche, nihilism was epitomized by the death of God – the devaluation of the highest value (Vattimo 1991: 20). As mentioned in the introduction, the value devalued in the setting described here is not necessarily that of religion, of the Orthodox Church. Rather, it is the value of political change. It is the value, we might say, of utopian ideas and visions that have been prevalent in Georgian politics both during the Soviet period in the shape of a proclaimed socialist path to a communist future and during the post-revolutionary period in the shape

of neo-liberal ideals underpinning a perceived path to a country freed from post-Soviet turmoil. Although highly different in terms of political content, these political visions have both featured idealized versions of a grand future, a glorious end-point (Frederiksen and Gotfredsen 2017). And both end-points alike have, at different times in history, for some parts of the population ended up garnering distrust rather than hope.

In a context such as the one depicted here, the legal outcome of the attack at Campus Studio described in the introduction is almost predictable. Despite the severeness of the attack, no one was sentenced; nothing happened. There may well have been nihilists among the students, artists and architects at Campus Studio who were attacked for reading Nietzsche. Or they may just have been people who liked reading. And if the aim of the attackers was to strike down on nihilist sentiments, they might as well have gone to a random luncheon where a group of middle-aged women were discussing politics. The latter were not in any way against the Georgian Orthodox Church but they certainly believed that nothing existed. But there are of course central differences between the two. While (if that had been the point) the reading of Nietzsche and discussing his texts via loudspeakers is a public demonstration of one's belief in nihilism – a clear declaration of nothing – the discussions among Marina's friends and the doing of nothing among Vano and Paata's crowd is a much more private affair. None of them are engaging, but rather gravitating towards nothing. They are not really waiting for anything specific. As with Beckett's Estragon and Vladimir, there is no Godot, there is no telos, there is nothing beyond nothing – it does not matter which stone one picks up to suck as they are all tasteless, it does not matter that one has a piece of glass stuck in one's neck, or who is or becomes president – neither will make a difference anyway. If actual difference is ever to come around, it is the nothingness itself that will need to change, as the 'somethingness' has proved unable to.

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Notes

- 1 From Father Basil Mkalavishvili's organized assaults on religious minorities such as Jehova's Witnesses, Baptists and Evangelists to the anti-gay rally in 2013 that saw priests and supporters alike violently attacking a group of gay-rights activists, causing serious injuries. Patriarch Ilia II had the night before the latter event called homosexuality 'an anomaly and disease' and later refused to condemn the behaviour of the priests (Peuch 2005; Antelava 2013).
- 2 In Georgian, *adamiani ar aris* means literally 'is not a human' or 'un-human'.
- 3 The revolution had started in relation to accusations of ballot fraud during an election, as well as general accusations of corruption within the government of then-President Eduard Shevardnadze (see Manning 2007; Frederiksen and Gotfredsen 2017).
- 4 See Gotfredsen (2015) for a series of examples.
- 5 Internally Displaced Persons. Since the gaining of independence in 1991 several waves of IDPs from the civil wars in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have been living in Georgia, with a new wave having been created in 2008 during the war with Russia in South Ossetia.
- 6 See for instance Carr 1992; Cunningham 2002; Weller 2008; Diken 2009.
- 7 'Dr K. Takes the Waters at Riva' is part three of the four-part novel *Vertigo* in which Kafka appears as the character Dr K. (Sebald 2000).
- 8 In this respect, the post-revolutionary rhetoric of change put forth by Mikhail Saakashvili and the subsequent scepticism he faced from Georgian citizens differs little from Barrack Obama's presidency in the US. He too was elected as an icon of hope and soon faced the difficulties of meeting expectations he himself had created.
- 9 One might argue here that this places Beckett within the nihilist paradox that the absence of meaning is always some sort of meaning. Devenney (2001) notes how 'Beckett's art is an art that aspires to be ever less, in the extreme to be nothing – "only just almost never" – an art of zero' (2001: 146). In this resides the paradox that a play, a short story or a novel is always in some sense something – there are pages, titles and words. As Devenney goes on to show, Beckett was well aware of this and himself, writing:

in the 'Texts for Nothing' Beckett will suggest a similar paradox: 'all you have to do is say you said nothing and so say nothing again'. The point ... is that even when saying nothing it must all in the end be something, if only because it was said in the first place, and the only recourse is to say nothing, and then say it again, and again, because nothing, inanity can always be transformed into something. In *Waiting for Godot* Didi remarks 'this is all becoming really insignificant' to which Gogo responds, 'Not enough.' (2001: 146–147)
- 10 For a similar situation, see Michael Herzfeld's classic study on how bureaucracy was established to secure accountability but often ends up creating the opposite in reality, namely indifference (Herzfeld 1992).

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Not-Waiting to Die Badly: Facing the Precarity of Dying Alone in Japan

Anne Allison

The presenter starts up with his PowerPoint. Five minutes in, the screen fills with things. Of personal belongings left behind after their owners have died. Stacks of newspapers; collections of model airplanes; wooden swords, slippers and books. The image shifts to another: piles of magazines and needlepoint, shelves of dried fish and rice crackers, heaps of dust cloths and mosquito coils. And yet another where the disorder is as evident as the decay: tatami mats strewn with half-eaten noodle cups, crushed beer cans, loose chopsticks and cigarette butts.¹

Five or six more scenes follow this, all of matter that, once of the living, now constitute remains of the dead. But the subject of today's forum is not death as much as life: about how to live actively (*ikiikito kurasu tameni*) by managing the details of one's dead remains while still alive (*seizenseiri*). The organization holding the event is Ending Centre, a citizen's group devoted to treating death and post-mortuary practices with respect. Founded in 1989 by Inoue Haruyo,² a leading advocate for the human rights of the dead and both professor and practitioner of what she calls midwifery – helping to birth death – Ending Centre targets those looking for alternatives to the family grave (located usually in a Buddhist temple and tied to long-time parishioner status) and the standard funeral practice (highly ceremonial and exorbitantly priced). As it says in the promotional brochure, Ending Centre helps members prepare for a good day of death (*yori yoku shinu hi no tameni*). The emphasis here is on both a good death and preparation, and on the individual assuming responsibility for these technologies of deathcare oneself. So Ending Centre caters to self-management of death: managing how and where one goes once dead and the possibility, sometimes choice, that this will be all alone.³

It is to understand more about this work that I have come to today's forum, one of two held annually by Ending Centre. The forum leader is Yagi Tomohiko, a peppy man in his early forties who is the president of Relief, a company that cleans up and disposes of belongings left behind by the deceased. Part of a new genre of Japanese business, Relief first started in 2002, with 104 staff and three offices nationwide in its fifth year of operation. Its basic service is '*katazakeru*', which means to sort out, clean up and dispose. These then are 'companies that straighten up possessions of the deceased' (*ihin seiri kaisha*, 遺品整理会社). As Mr Yagi points out, it once was 'only natural' to expect surviving family members or close friends to sort out the remains of the dead, but this is no longer the case. Everyone is busy and living in cramped urban space, but also, thanks to the demographics of low childbirth and a high aging population, more and more Japanese are living longer, not having children, and – with the rise of an ethos of self-responsibility – not wanting to burden others with the task of managing their remains after death.

Grimacing, Yagi-san shows us the images he has brought of rooms and houses stacked to the roof with stuff. Isn't this a chore, he rhetorically asks, cleaning up the mountains of possessions left behind by the deceased? Nods of weary recognition circulate the room. At this, Mr Yagi turns on a brief video, a testimony by a man in his thirties who tells how Relief handled the clean-up of his grandmother's house. Dreading the task, the family had let the house sit as is for ten years after the woman had died. Only now, and thanks to Relief, the house had finally been emptied and the memory of the grandmother benevolently restored. Echoing the work of Kondo Marie and her method of joyfully simplifying – and reducing – the surfeit of one's material possessions,⁴ Mr Yagi is urging us to consider the ecology of dead remains: how, once one dies, stuff decays in rooms that no longer hold the living, becoming useless matter that does not matter to anyone else.

But why a presentation on remains of the deceased in a forum held by an organization devoted to preparing for a good death oneself? As Mr Yagi announces early on, many of the pictures come from the homes of people who died alone. This is a phenomenon, labelled lonely or solitary death (*kodokushi*, *koritsushi*), that has been much in the news of late. Typically involving someone who had lived alone for years and whose body gets discovered weeks or even months after death, this is a state – solitary living/dying – often used to indicate the trend of 'disconnected' social existence (*muen shakai*) in post-industrial Japan. As detailed in the television special NHK broadcast on the topic in January 2010, there were 33,000 known cases of 'lonely death' that had occurred in the country

the year before: a number that has been rising ever since. One-fourth of the cases his company has handled involve persons who died alone, Yagi reports, adding that the men have often been hoarders, and the women collectors of everything from Tupperware to tea. Showing us multiple scenes of such residents, he said the worst he saw had garbage up to within inches of the ceiling: a real room 'stuffed with trash' (*gomiyashiki*). Not only dangerous to the resident while still living, such clutter is unpleasant for whomever discovers it (often neighbours or landlords who are alerted by the smell of decay). Yagi, then, is giving us a warning that concerns not (only) things left by others (a parent, aunt or spouse), but the things we would leave ourselves – and the encumbrance they would impose upon others – should we die alone. A sobering message about the future that might await us and the preparation we are to make now to ward against leaving clutter, and becoming clutter ourselves, at death.

In this chapter, I consider what such a prospect does to the social imagination: of dying alone, preparing for such a possibility, and even turning all of the above into a method for 'active living' – as invoked by Mr Yagi in his presentation on cleaning up (so as not to become one's own) dead remains. Rather than a strategy of hope per se as Hiro Miyazaki (2004), borrowing on Ernst Bloch, defines it as a method for living oriented towards a future that is not-yet, initiatives like that of Ending Centre are working towards 'birthing' end-of-life so as to contain the anxiety, and need, of depending on others when the time of death actually comes. To avoid, that is, a particular kind of future: dying all alone, unrecognized or ungrieved by others, displaced or far from home, as scholars have delineated the calculus for a bad death (Hertz 1960; Parry 1994; Agamben 1999). More than moving towards the future then, Ending Centre helps its members be freed from the future: a future of getting stuck dying badly.

The affective and practical strategies taken against this I call 'active not waiting', playing off what others have argued is 'active waiting' done by those attempting to survive amidst the precarity of poverty, warfare or the displacement of citizenship/home (Hage 2009; Chu 2010; Han 2011). Unlike the latter though, whose hopes and energies get pinned to a goal or world outside the here and now, 'not waiting' pitches the person more to the present, a present that gets reanimated by warding off the prospect of a bad kind of death. In both cases, attempts are being made to increase the capacity to persevere – what Spinoza labelled *conatus* and considered an ethical good and also 'joy' – and to avoid the

stuckedness of immobility (Hage 2009). In the practices I look at here, however, joy comes from the endeavour made to persevere not life itself as much as the possibility (and anxiety this engenders) of dying all alone. By acknowledging and preparing for this prospect, one then lives, until death, in the here and now. This, as I see it, is the attempt to fill in what Norbert Elias has called the ‘blank area on the social map’ haunting death in late modern, liberal societies. As he has argued: ‘Never before have people died as noiselessly and hygienically as today in these societies, and never in social conditions so much fostering solitude’ (1985: 85). Dying in a state of loneliness, ‘excluded from the community of the still living’ (p. 66), feeling that ‘he or she has scarcely any significance for other people’ (p. 64). But, emerging around death these days in Japan, is the trace of something quite different: noise made around dying, even as socially single, as a possibility whose precarity is to be managed and prepared for while still alive.

Ending Centre is part of a new trend of businesses and activities (citizen’s groups, non-profit organizations, commercial services) converging around the management of death in post-bubble Japan: what is generically called ‘*shūkatsu*’ (the ending market – or market in death 終活). Driven by demographics – an aging population that is also dying at an historically high rate, making Japan what some call a ‘mass dying society’ – this is conditioned as well by economic precaritization (economic decline, a nagging recession, and insecurity of labour and jobs that is a big factor in the high suicide rates since 1998)⁵ and social and residential shifts towards ‘singlification’. As coined by sociologist Yamada Masahiro (2014), ‘singlification’ (*shinguru-ka*) indicates demographic and residential trends towards singular living: a high aging/low birthrate society (*shōshikōreika shakai*) where marriage, coupling and even sex is in on the decrease, and one-third of all people, including the elderly, live alone. As singlification coordinates with economic shifts and the decline of the nuclear family, what has been the primary social unit in post-war Japan and the de facto welfare provider in lieu of the state (whose allocation of social welfare has been woefully low (Allison 2013)), Yamada sees in this the dissolution of the social, and single Japanese as socially, and existentially, bereft. ‘Refugees’ (*kazoku nanmin*) is what he calls them: the position also taken by NHK in its documentary on lonely death where the state of living, and dying, singly is treated as a sign of Japan becoming a ‘*muen shakai*’, society of disconnection.

A pitiful state, and one that is well known to the public these days, and the conjuring of its imaginary, through the constant references to lonely death in the media. And for those who die alone, where they wind up after that is common knowledge as well. If no one has claimed their remains or come forward to

bury them in a family plot, the lonely dead are sent by the municipal office to a Buddhist temple with a gravesite for the 'disconnected souls' (*muenbotoke*). Here the ashes of all those with no one to bury or memorialize them are collected and comingled: as unmarked and promiscuous in death. *Muenbotoke* means disconnected, and also abandoned: a meaning that an acquaintance instructed me on when we went to visit the grave of a recently deceased friend. Passing the burial site for the *muenbaka* (the grave for the disconnected) in the Buddhist cemetery, she noted its untidiness. With weeds overgrown and no flowers or incense left as offerings, it lacked the touch of care: the tending a child or kin should provide, making and marking the deceased as 'grievable'. As defined by Judith Butler, grievability depends on 'a social network of hands'. 'Only under conditions in which the loss would matter does the value of life appear. Thus, grievability is a presupposition for the life that matters' (2010: 14). Without those hands, making them matter to somebody else, the dead become abandoned: a state that is both lonely and unseemly, as my friend implied with a frown. Dead matter that does not matter to the living: socially void, the sign of a bad death.

But not everyone is so dystopic about the trending of singlification as an increasing lifestyle and deathstyle in post-industrial Japan. Feminist and sociologist Ueno Chizuko, for example, has written two bestselling books about living as an '*ohitori-san*', a single person, and, more recently, *Ohitorisama no saigo* (2015), something of a guidebook on how to manage end-of-life including dying at home: what she calls not lonely or solitary death but single death at home (*zaitaku hitori shi*). And Inoue Haruyo, the founder and director of Ending Centre, finds a growing response to initiatives such as her own to help people manage mortuary and post-mortem arrangements outside the convention of the family grave and, sometimes, without the involvement of kin altogether: what she has coined 'detachment from the succession system' (*datsukeishō*). Notably, the individual is called to handle what once was the duty of others: something these new endeavours enhance by appealing to the consumerist desire of choice – one can now die *jibunrashi*, as one likes. Couched in the language of freedom, how one dies becomes a matter of self-care, the technologies and cost of which depend on the inclination and resources of the individual (acting as liberal subject, liberated from traditional custom). But such a mindset, of preparing and assuming responsibility for one's own mortuary arrangements, is not merely the purview of the well-healed and moneyed (or childless and single). Aging day-labourers in the San'ya district of Tokyo, for example, have established a collective *haka* (grave) to be buried in when they die.⁶ Rather than be alone and abandoned, they join each other when dead: a concept not unlike that of

Ending Centre where one makes 'grave-friends' to be buried next to so as not to be lonely post-death.

This is the terrain I explore here: how the prospect, or possibility, of dying alone is changing the ecology between the living and dead in the post-industrial landscape of twenty-first-century Japan. In what are times marked by precarity – the irregularization of the job market, the nuclear dangers posed by the meltdowns at the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant, the demographic shrinking and aging of the population – the sociology of relatedness is transforming. What had once been the norm in the way of durable relations over time (of marriage, work, locale) is becoming far more uncertain today. But, as Anna Tsing has noted about precarity, what she calls the 'condition of our time,' uncertainty itself can prompt new forms of life, death and life out of death. 'A precarious world is a world without teleology. Indeterminacy, the unplanned nature of time, is frightening, but thinking through precarity makes it evident that indeterminacy also makes life possible' (2015: 20). What, then, is the kind of life, and for whom and under what conditions, getting animated by the possibility of dying alone in Japan these days? And what are we to make of the efforts, and now businesses, that embrace a policy of not waiting to deal with the sociological indeterminacy of dying alone? My argument is that, while singlization is an increasing fact of life in Japan, it spells less the end of the social per se as much as the emergence of new ways of constituting and imagining being with/out others – new assemblages and assemblies of life, non-life, and a border that is shifting between the two.

The placement/displacement of the dead

What older Japanese fear the most is abandonment, according to Jason Danely (2013), an anthropologist who has studied aging and dying in contemporary Japan. Even more than death itself or the physical deterioration of one's body and health, the thought of being all alone, discarded or forgotten by others, is disturbing. And all too possible, as we have seen. Even for those living in the countryside, the bastion of 'village society' where ties with neighbours, workmates and kin might be thought to be strong, the suicide rate of the elderly is high, even higher than in the cities (Traphagan 2004). The elderly often feel isolated, Danely discovered, and even amongst family the generation gap with children and grandchildren can be vast. Meanwhile friends are dying or moving away, further shrinking the world within which one feels at home. Losing a sense of connection and recognition, elderly people struggle with the desire to not be a

bother as well. As Danely heard time and time again, a premium value is placed on not being a burden to those one would (otherwise) most likely depend upon: family and kin. Such a moral principle has only intensified in the neoliberal environment of post-1990s Japan when, after the bursting of the bubble economy and the onset of a nagging recession that has lasted twenty-five years, an ethos of 'self-responsibilization' has been heralded from the government on down (Allison 2013).

And yet, 'bother', as in expending energy and care on/from another, is precisely the relationship the living are expected to maintain with the dying and the dead. Conceptualized as a social contract, the relationship is to be one of inter-generational dependence and reciprocity. Based in the family, family members are to care-give for the elderly and ritually tend to the dead by nourishing them with offerings and food. The latter, as noted by anthropologist John Traphagan (2004), constitutes a practice that itself is constitutive of what stands for religion in a country where most Japanese consider themselves not actually religious. Calling this – and cognate rituals that tend to spirits, ancestors, gods, others and oneself – a 'practice of concern' (the title of his book on the subject), Traphagan considers it a 'pedagogy of agency' driven less by theological interest than a sense of morality to dead others but also *for* others in maintaining one's own well-being and health. What this comes down to in terms of practising concern for the dead is giving offerings, memorial and food on both an everyday basis (at the *butsudan*, or Buddhist altar kept in the home) and seasonally (during *O-bon*, the season for receiving the dead back home, as well as on designated anniversaries of death). Fittingly then, the spectre of disconnected souls (*muenbotoke*) is that of hungry ghosts, who receiving 'no veneration are fated to become pitiable homeless spirits, bereft of the taken-for-granted human and posthumous conditions of connections and reciprocity in Japanese society' (Kawano 2010: 11).

The homelessness of the dead is a sign of post-industrial times. Of shifting conditions that make precarious, or impractical, the social contract once held between the living and dead. As was the norm in post-war Japan, this contract devolves upon the family: venerating the dead at the domestic altar (usually Buddhist, but sometimes Shinto) and at the family grave where generations of the family's remains are interred. Genealogically sacred but also guided by a principle of primogeniture granting only the eldest son the right to be buried there, the family grave marks the emplacement of ancestors and also the contact zone between the living and dead. As such, it serves as 'receptacle for the spirits of the ancestors, a site for ritual offerings to the dead, and a symbol of family

continuity and belonging' (Reader 1991: 96). Bred here is a relationship of reciprocity; the dead look over the living and the living help ease the passage of the spirit to the other side. While practices and beliefs vary, they often combine a mix of popular beliefs (including ancestor worship) with Mahayana Buddhism in which the spirits of the dead, referred to as 'buddhas' (*hotoke*), depend upon the living to perform rituals of memorialization. Under these beliefs, the dead are thought to become honoured ancestors, buddhas (or gods, when Shinto rituals are added in), with the assistance of living descendants (or bodhisattvas) who perform memorialization.

To not perform these mortuary rituals has long been thought to incur danger to not only the dead (at risk of getting stranded or lost), but also the living (on whom an angry spirit can wreak damage and harm). Particularly vulnerable or volatile in the early period following death, spirits require purification and consolation (Suzuki 2000). Buddhist priests chant sutras and the body is washed and dressed before cremation. Then, on the 49th day and when given a Buddhist posthumous name (*kaimyo*), the deceased becomes a buddha (*hotoke*). To safely make one's passage from this world to the next, the *hotoke* still relies on help from the living, which includes the money spent on mortuary arrangements (the more spent, the quicker the passage, it is said) and offerings made through services (*kuyō*) for the spirit at the memorial tablet (*ihai*) kept at the household altar as well as the grave. But eventually the *hotoke* will merge with the collective body of ancestors and/or deities (often considered to take between 32 and 33 years) at which point the individual's *ihai* can be discarded or moved back in the household altar and family grave (Reader 1991; Kawano 2010).

In the urban migration that followed the end of the war, in the 1950s and 1960s, Japanese flooded to the cities, leaving a lifestyle of 'village society' marked by extended households and ancestral attachments behind. Tending to the dead has become far less convenient now, and less part of the everyday rhythms and landscape of the living. With the family grave far away, Japanese have to make long treks back to natal homes for *O-bon*, the season of inviting the dead back for a short visit. Residences in the cities are often smaller than in the countryside (with little room for a Buddhist altar), and lifestyles busier (making daily or seasonal memorial more difficult). And the household has narrowed; the residential pattern for families has shifted from the extended to the nuclear and Japanese are increasingly living alone, remaining unmarried, and not having children. This impacts on how many still have a family grave, for to maintain one at a Buddhist temple requires that the family be long-standing parishioners: an investment in commitment and considerable funds over

the years. Without such ties that need to be cultivated and nursed over time, many find the money owed a temple or priest on the occasion of death to be unseemly: a gross extraction of cash rather than the gift of memorial meant for the dead. The price tag on funerals, as well as gravestones and memorial goods (including *kaimyo*, which can be shockingly expensive), is high and difficult for those struggling in the uncertainty of the current labour and financial market. Today, more and more Japanese opt for streamlined versions: the 'direct funeral' or 'family funeral' at the graveside that forego the elaboration of a more formal affair where attendants are treated to a meal, drink, and gifts.

What does it mean for the constitution and temporality of society when memorializing the dead begins to fade as a genealogical proposition? Continuity, as scholars like Emile Durkheim have long noted, is the marker of the sacred, and itself, of the social: marking life as extending beyond the physicality of the biological body, the entity of the individual and the temporality of the here and now. Giving respect to the dead is universal, Thomas Laqueur argues in his recent book, *The Work of the Dead*: 'We live with the dead for they define generations' and 'demarcate the sacred and the profane' (2015: 4). But what Laqueur calls a universal regard for the dead is, in fact, premised on a very particular notion of the social: what a number of sociologists (for example, Berger 1969; Aries 1981; Elias 1985; Giddens 1991; Lasch 1991) have found to be shrinking in post-industrial societies along with the privatization and individualization of everyday life. As they have argued, whereas it was once an imminently social affair surrounded by ritual, religion and the acts of grieving others, in the biopolitics given life today, death gets medicalized and the dead hidden away in hospitals where individuals die alone and detached. In societies oriented to the future (the hallmark of modernity), there is little space or accommodation for death: which makes those facing it feel so vulnerable and scared. Dying thus becomes a lonely endeavour, as Elias has noted, not only socially but also existentially when the structures for making sense of it are no longer in place (Mellor and Schilling 1993).

Yet, agreeing with Charles Hirschkind (2008), who finds death less invisibilized in the post-industrial global north as the object of distinct sets of knowledge and practice where it features quite centrally in ethical and political life (around the issue of abortion, for example, in the United States), I see recent changes in Japanese end-of-life and mortuary practices to indicate not the death of death per se but more a shift in how it shapes, and is shaped by, the social – which itself is shifting at the same time. Less dependent on the family (for care) and less tethered to a principle of continuity (for marking the dead), emerging is a new ethics and sociology around the self-management of death – which is what I turn to next.

Preparation to die otherwise

It is June 2015 and I have come to a workshop on care held by the Tokyo People's Action Volunteer Centre. The central headquarters for volunteering in Japan, it is hosting the event for a non-profit organization (NPO) called Association for Making Connections in Housing and Living for Old Age. The main topic for discussion is care, and things start off with a presentation by a woman who runs her own NPO, Aladdin, geared to supporting networks for caregivers. Addressing a room of about 45 people, mainly middle - to older aged, Ms Makino says she is delighted to see so many men. This is the first time women have not dominated her audiences and she wonders if this is a new trend. Beaming widely, she energetically starts in.

Support activities (*shien katsudō*) geared up in Japan at the time of the Hanshin Earthquake in Kobe in 1995. Before then, care had been primarily the purview of the family, she tells us. But, with the crisis of the earthquake that included numbers of people who died all alone – which ignited awareness of the problem of 'lonely death' and also measures taken by community and municipal groups to address it – this started to change. Today, more and more public, civic and community initiatives have emerged that are extra-familial organizations: helping to supplement or substitute for a caregiving that once devolved upon the family alone. Ms Makino refers to such care provider networks as 'para-families' (*giji kazoku*), noting shifts in the demographics of caregiving. While once it was overwhelmingly women, as daughters and wives, today 30 per cent of caregivers are men. And while 55 per cent of those taking care of the elderly are over the age of 60, increasingly the trends in delayed marriage, delayed or no childbirth, and singlification (one-third of adult men and one-fourth of adult women stay single) mean that it is not only, or necessarily, family members doing the caring, which is also taking place increasingly at home (*zaitaku*). Yet sadly, Ms Makino tells us, shaking her head, that only 35 per cent of Japanese are prepared for this process according to a 2012 survey done by Asahi Seimei on family and care. The woman in her sixties sitting next to me leans over to say this is exactly her situation; she came today from two hours away to start preparing for the next stage ahead.

The rest of the presentation focuses on various facilities or initiatives that offer support to caregivers (or 'carers', *keara-zu* as she calls them): community cafes, chatrooms, monthly get-togethers over coffee or beer. Offering a much-needed break in one's routine and an opportunity to mingle and learn from others in a similar situation, these are a social safety zone: a people's assembly – using the

term Butler lays out in her recent book (*Notes Towards a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 2015). As she defines it there, an assembly is driven by a shared sense of not only precarity (as in insecurity stemming from insufficient resources) but also responsibility (as in the responsibility caregivers assume in caretaking someone else but also caring for themselves). ‘The more one complies with the demand of “responsibility” to become self-reliant, the more socially isolated one becomes and the more precarious one feels’ (2015: 15). Indeed, isolation is one of the biggest sources of strain that caregivers experience, as Ms Makino explains. But coming to a carer’s café opens up both a space and time to be responsible/precarious together: what Ms Makino calls an ‘*ibasho*’, a place where one feels comfortable and at home.⁷ Sharing with us letters from carers who have attended these cafes, she reads one by a man in his thirties who has been caring for his 100-year-old grandmother still living at home.

It is hard taking care of someone, and I have been all alone with no one to share this with. I am so thankful for this café. Having it means a relief for my heart that has been sequestered in an evacuation shelter.

Although Ms Makino notes the risk of isolation and solitude more generally in Japan today, at a moment when more and more Japanese are living alone and trending away from couplings (including sexually; as much as 40 per cent of Japanese youth report being unengaged sexually and sexlessness is high even among the married),⁸ she fails to mention the proliferation of alternative forms of communication and companionship that have arisen alongside these social shifts. The market is booming these days in everything from social media and chatrooms, virtual relationality (with characters, idols, video games) and paid-for company or romance (rental families and friends, host and cabaret clubs) to dolls (ball-jointed dolls customizable by taste), robots (such as Sony’s Aibo) and pets (hugely popular, with a wide array of services being provided for them, such as cat cafes, dog yoga studios and pet cemeteries). How intimacy formed with a character or dog, or affectivity formed with a paid-for caregiver or host, differs from that of a relationship forged through marriage, family or friendship is a complex and variable matter. But the fact that memorial services (*kuyō*) occur today for not only pets but also Aibo robots, tamagotchi, dolls and cellphones⁹ reflects the degree of affection and attachment owners feel for such companions and the interpenetration of such virtual/pet/technological companionship in the social and intimate lives of twenty-first-century Japanese. In the domain of care, much research is being done on the development of technological caregiving; Japan’s R & D in care robotics is the most advanced in the world,

driven by the country's highly aging society and what is already a care deficit (in provisions and providers of care). Thus, while not addressed in the forum today, it is important to keep in mind how such social shifts as singlification and self-care (managing the self, by the self) in Japan today are both enabled by and generating themselves, commercial/non-human apparatus for attending to such basic 'human' needs as communication, companionship and care.

After speaking for an hour, Ms Makino ends her presentation. Following a short break, we are invited back into the room for break-out sessions around the issue of different residential arrangements for senior living – whether at home or a facility, and whether all alone or with a partner or family. Having designated my own likely course to be at home with a partner, I am put in a group (the smallest in the room) with three others, all married men. Facilitated by a member of the NPO running today's workshop, the discussion revolves around the dynamics of care and how we all are doing, what stage we are at, and what issues we are having now or anticipate in our future. One man, aged 78, says he is in the throes of caregiving (*kaigochū*); his wife has been sick and although they have an adult child who lives at home with them, they do not want to burden her with the chore. So he has been doing the bulk of it, all the while trying to maintain his own health to alleviate the need for a caregiver himself for as long as possible. Another man, aged 72,¹⁰ has a wife and two adult children at home, and while both he and his wife are still fit, he is here today to start planning ahead. The third man, aged 50, is concerned about re-establishing contact with his estranged children from a first marriage but, as an end-of-life counsellor himself, it seems he is here in large part to drum up clients. And when my turns comes, I tell them about what was uppermost in my mind at the time: dealing with an aging mother who had recently developed Alzheimer's.

Our facilitator is engaging and warm in facilitating discussion and offering advice about the aging process. And throughout, as she concludes at the end of our hour with her, is the message: take care of yourselves and prepare for end-of-life as soon as you can. The feel is both upbeat and moralizing – about how to just jump in and face aging/death with a light heart but also how essential it is to manage this as earnestly and quickly as one can. I get up to leave, at once energized and exhausted by the task: the task of caring, as in looking after oneself (in looking after others) but also of caring for oneself by biopolitically technologizing the self in preparation for dying. This seems a somewhat different threshold of life/death from what Foucault (2003) outlined in his concept of biopolitics. For, as he argued, in the transformation from sovereign power organized around the right to take life or let live to a different technology

of power targeted to the living instead (as in making the species stronger, more productive, less diseased or short-lived), death now becomes hidden away as something private, even shameful. Power no longer recognizes death; it literally ignores it, Foucault has written of the biopolitical age. But this is not what I am seeing this day in the Tokyo Volunteer Centre. Rather, death here is centre-stage, as it is in the proliferation of initiatives, services and businesses that now help people manage it well (*shūkatsu*). In preparing for a good death, one is being asked/tasked/serviced to adopt self-responsibility towards oneself. A preparation that is a practice, something akin even to a ritual, in that organizing for death is also intended to be a method for living life (more fully) until the end. So, animating death in order to animate living before death; less a matter of biopolitics, this may reflect a new order of power around the management of life/non-life (abetted by robots, pets, virtual companions and caregivers). Not necropolitics in Mbembe's sense (2003), but something perhaps akin to what Povinelli (2016) calls geontopower, referencing the break-down of the old binarisms between life and death, life and non-life in late liberal societies.

On the way out, I grab some materials laid out on the table. One of these is a citizens' newsletter printed by the city of Yokohama. The main article is a synopsis of a forum recently led by the founder and president of Keepers, the first company specializing in the clean-up of the remains of the deceased (*ihin seiri kaisha*). Started in 2002, the company now handles 1,500–2,600 cases a year, 200–300 of which are of people who die alone. The majority (70–80 per cent) are men (true as well for the phenomena of social withdrawal and suicide – usually correlated with the normative centrality of work in the lives, identities and social companionship of men; lonely diers are typically men who lose connection to the outside world after retiring or losing jobs) and, if they die with bodies that remain undiscovered for longer than a week, the smell can be horrific, as Mr Yoshida graphically described to the audience. This leads into the first of his two main points:

We can't let this occur – these deaths of people who die alone recognized by nobody [*kizuite morae nai shi*] surrounded by what becomes the possessions of the deceased. In order to prevent this, it is important for us to be people who won't be discovered in these conditions (*A-tofuo-ramu Azamino*, 28 February 2015: 3).

If the first point is about death – about not being cluttered with stuff that will only inconvenience others if one should die 'unrecognized' at the end – the second is about life – about 'leading a full life everyday', as he put it, and devoting most of one's resources on the time that is remaining. What is important, Yoshida

urged in his talk, is ‘quickly coming up with a concrete plan’ for how to use, and use up, one’s money in the here and now. Keeping one-third of one’s resources in reserve (for emergencies or if one lives longer than expected) is recommended, but, after that, one should spend on the present: enjoying a ‘full time’ with others or by oneself.

On both scores then, what is advised is active not waiting: to be active in the present by spending one’s later years not passively awaiting and feeling anxious about (a bad) death. But there is a message here too about the kind of death one should engineer: a remainderless death, leaving no remainder (as in the clutter of personal possessions or even money or property) that someone else (children or relatives) would inherit once one dies.¹¹ Although not using the word ‘*muen*’ (without connection), Yoshida envisions here a remapping of the strands of sociality and temporality that once organized the matters of life and death in ‘village society’ Japan. Oriented less towards ancestors in the past or descendants in the future, the focus is more on being present in the now and making a form of connectedness here. The threshold death, once represented as a gateway to joining ancestors but with the precarity of having to make one’s way through to the other side, is thus reconfigured. Attention is paid instead to managing the anxiety of imagining dying all alone: a precarity felt more in the present and thus relieved (*anshin suru*) by attending to the preparations for one’s death as soon as possible.

This is the lesson taken by one of the participants in the forum at Yokohama. In her reflections on Yoshida’s presentation in the newsletter, she writes of cleaning up her house recently and noticing how much she did not really need. Things that had value to her would be ‘unneeded things’ once she died, becoming the remains of the deceased (*ihin*). Admitting that she could imagine becoming part of the social phenomenon of dying alone – ‘one never knows who or when someone will die a lonely death; it could happen in the middle of a normal life’ – she says the most memorable thing she learned from Mr Yoshida was to ‘decide what you want to do until what age you want to do it’ and spend two-thirds of your resources on that. This was a positive message, stressing decisions made by oneself for oneself, about the things one wanted to do (*yaritai koto*). And, as long as one acted according to what one had decided in life, then it did not matter if one lacked ‘connections with others to manage, and straighten up, one’s stuff at the end’. One could have a ‘bright feeling’ (*akarui kimochi*) anyway (*A-tofuo-ramu Azamino*, 28 February 2015: 3). Embracing a Spinozan principle of joy, the emphasis here is on increasing one’s capacity to persevere in the now despite the uncertainty of how one will die in the future.

All of what I learned at the workshop this day involved methods for actively coping with caregiving for others and caregiving for oneself, in an age of singular living and dying alone; and about trying to do this responsibly in the face of a precarious, or limited, 'social network of hands'. But what of preparations made for after-death as well? Is there any attempt to retain something sacred here: ways of marking, or attending, the deceased other than through the genealogical principle of belonging dictated by vertical ties of membership and obligation? A different sociality of/for the dead? This is the issue I address in the next section.

The sacred by other means

This is a moment of great innovation around mortuary and post-mortem practices in Japan. Given the high percentage of elderly in the population (26 per cent over the age of 65, which is projected to rise to 38 per cent by 2055), and the trend towards singlification, more and more Japanese are living alone, and ever more finding themselves homeless or unsure of their dwelling once dead. This is the state of *muenbotoke*, as we have seen: souls displaced from a line of continuity with the yet unborn and dead ancestors of generations past. The latter is the domain of the sacred, whether it is constituted along religious grounds or more secular grounds as Benedict Anderson has argued for nationalism in *Imagined Communities* (2006). For what religions provide is a way of conceptualizing end-of-life as continuous with life in different terms: reincarnation, heaven, paradise, nation-state.

In modern Japan, grievability has been the purview of the family; one grieves, and is grieved by, others who are linked by marriage or blood. The site around which this converges is the family grave. Yet this was never always already a happy story: one necessarily of inclusion in which everyone, by fact of kinship, gains entry into the ranks of the grievable dead. As described by Inoue Haruyo (2012), the founder of Ending Centre, when her mother died at age 62 in 1981, there was no family grave for her to be buried in. Married to a second son who, under the rule of primogeniture, had no rights to burial in his family grave, their own nuclear family was without one. So the family had to start building one at the very time when the family was mourning the mother's unexpected death: a traumatic memory for Inoue. A friend shared a similar story of her father who died unexpectedly in his sixties. Also a second son without a family grave, the family buried him in a temporary burial plot for a year while constructing their own family grave – at much expense and great inconvenience. Another

friend, a woman who is married but childless, is worried about who will perform memorial rights when she and her husband die, and also where they will be buried (as her husband's family has no grave and, having a different married name, she is not allowed into the grave of her father's family). She also worries about her aging mother living all alone far away. Although she would like to bring her to live with them, this would leave the soul of her dead father without someone to perform memorial (*kuyō*) for him at the family grave

As these stories show, even those with 'family' are often stranded or stressed about their placement in a family grave upon death. This is due, in part, to the nature of Japan's succession system (*keishō seido*) that, besides upholding the principle of primogeniture, also demands that women change their maiden name upon marriage (by law in a ruling the Supreme Court upheld in 2015). Retaining elements of the old family system (when patriarchy and religion converged around the emperor as the nation's father and god) despite the changes applied to it under the post-war democratic constitution, the system maps out succession on an exclusionary basis. Women, for example, can enter the natal grave as daughters but lose this connection once married. As Inoue has noted, they become 'disconnected' (*muen*) from their family of birth upon marriage (2012: 14). But should a woman then get divorced, keeping her married name but losing the right to be buried in a husband's family grave, she is doubly displaced. The lines of succession cut many people out: single or childless households, couples with only daughters, second or third sons, divorced women and women in general. And coupled with the exigencies of modern, urban lifestyles when people move more often and far away from parents or offspring, the alignment of succession and grievability are increasingly at odds.

It is for this reason that Ogawa Eiji, the head priest of Myōkōji Temple (Nichiren sect of Buddhism) in Niigata, wrote what in 1989 was a controversial article in a weekly news journal, 'How to Avoid Dying Without a Grave'. Advocating the disaggregation of the burial system from the family and family grave, he initiated a new way of being buried and memorialized outside family attachments the same year. This was in a communal grave, with the guarantee of memorial rites to be carried out by someone at the temple (for thirty-three years), and at a reasonable cost that does not require becoming a parishioner at the temple. This system, called *eitaikuyō* (eternal memorial), has now spread to many temples across the country. By offering it, or something similar, to a consumer base that is responding increasingly well, revenues have been generated to help sustain what had been (and still is) a declining religion. This new business of death has given life to many Buddhist temples, and priests across the country, as Ogawa

admits. And today people are constantly coming to Myōkōji to seek out advice, as he told me in an interview: both individuals struggling with the issue of ‘Where to go when I die?’ and Buddhist practitioners keen for the know-how on how to refortify by diversifying their religious practice.

An early collaborator with Ogawa, with whom she ran a seminar in the 1990s to discuss the relationality around graves in twenty-first-century Japan, Inoue started Ending Centre around the same time and is well known today for her end-of-life work and human rights advocacy for the dead. Conceived as a citizen’s group for treating death and post-mortuary practices with respect, Ending Centre has evolved since 1989 into a registered NPO with burial grounds of its own. Seeing its mission as midwifery, helping to birth death, Inoue is non-religious in orientation and interested less in securing grievors for the to-be-deceased and more in producing a sense of security in and at death. Located on the outskirts of Tokyo, within a beautiful Buddhist cemetery with which it has no religious affiliation, Ending Centre is strewn with cherry trees, making nature one of the major attractions of those who choose to be buried here. The other, Inoue told me the day I visited, is a mortuary practice non-dependent on the succession system. Here the dead commune with nature in a burial ground where this and other alternative forms of companionship (such as pets, which are allowed to be buried with humans) take the place of or need for family. The dead are never alone here, its brochure points out, connected as they are to a braid of relations as with falling cherry blossoms. Rather than *muen* (disconnected), Inoue calls such a state – of being dead with, if nothing or no one else, cherry blossoms – *ketsuen*: which I translate as differential relatedness.

Returning to Judith Butler and her notion of the assembly that responds to precarity in a manner that engages ‘embodied action and forms of expressive freedom’ (2015: 10), I apply it to such initiatives as Ending Centre which, addressing the possibility of dying alone, are coming up with practices for facing this with both creativity and respect. Here the effort is made to actively not wait for death but to embrace the end, and the time one has before getting there, with something akin to joy and life. One strategy is preparing for a remainderless death by leaving no clutter behind, including the need to be grieved or memorialized by someone else.

As Inoue articulated it, the system at Ending Centre is one of individual ‘freedom’, choosing oneself, for oneself, how to be buried and (un)mourned – which could be considered the height of a neoliberal logic, taken quite literally to death. But what I sense is driving this, at least in part, is the very real fear of being abandoned at the end, and the desire to manage, and be in control

of, this while one can. And such an affective complex pertains not only to the mainly middle-class clientele I encountered in such NPOs as Ending Centre and the one running the workshop I attended at the Tokyo Volunteer Centre, but also to the aging day labourers in San'ya and Kamagaseki in Osaka,¹² whose motivation behind the collective graves they have built is to relieve the pain of anticipating being all alone/stranded when dead. The word I continually hear in these contexts is '*anshin*', peace of mind, a sense of relief: what Ending Centre promises as part of its plan and what a staff member for Sanyūkai in San'ya also called the effect/affect of the collective grave now existing in San'ya. Avoiding a future of being abandoned at death, one reassembles the lines of relationality both in life and for death. Stitching together a different kind and assortment of ties, including non-human with cherry blossoms and pets, this is not based on a continuity of lineage across time, the transmission of property or ties of obligation, or the structure of membership by nationality or blood. Rather, it comes from something else. From a refusal perhaps to have a bad death. For, as Butler says, speaking here of a bad life instead of death:

if this sort of world, what we might be compelled to call 'the bad life,' fails to reflect back my value as a living being, then I must become critical of those categories and structures that produce that form of effacement and inequality. In other words, I cannot affirm my own life without critically evaluating those structures that differentially value life itself (2015: 199).

One of the methods Inoue has designed for coping with all aloneness at the end of life, and beyond death, is that of a 'grave friend' (*haka tomo*). This entails making friends with someone to be buried next to at the time of death: a new friend with whom one buys adjacent plots in a burial ground and also starts associating with before one actually dies.¹³ A friend for the future to avoid solitariness once dead. The relationship that ensues is not one of mutual grievability or assistance in passing into the other world, helped by a friend instead of kin. Less instrumental or structured than this, it is simply accompaniment into death: an assembly based on precarity as much as responsibility now of the dead. This is a different conception of the sacred, bearing the seeds of a social differentially aligned in relatedness as well as time. One in which being single does not necessarily condemn one to the socially excluded; *muenbotoke*. And one in which co-residing, as dead, is something in and of itself: a means of dying actively and not-waiting to be homeless or lonely post-death.

Rather than signalling the end of the social, I see in this and the other initiatives dealt with in this chapter the emergence of new forms, and styles, of relatedness, organized around the crucible of death. Necro-sociality, we can call this. But, worked out over death, its implications also bear on the living: on how the calculus and constitution of existence are getting rejuggled vis-à-vis others and on how the distinction between life and death, and between life and non-life is shifting ground. As the director of another NPO, whose mission is to help single women deal with aging and death together, has said of the collective grave it has erected: 'A grave is not only a place for the dead; it is also a gathering place for the living.'¹⁴ Not sequestered away, the dead here enjoin the living to gather together – with them and one another – in a space as much of assembly and life, as of grievability and death. In this realignment of the ecology between life and death may be the germs of a new grammar for assigning (social/sacred) meaning to both.

Notes

- 1 I thank Manpreet K. Janeja and Andreas Bandak for the invitation to contribute to this volume and for their excellent suggestions and feedback on my essay.
- 2 Japanese names are written last name first, in Japanese style.
- 3 From the four meetings I have attended, members seem primarily middle class, slightly more women, and overwhelmingly middle - to late aged.
- 4 A self-proclaimed 'organizing consultant', Kondo Marie has written several bestselling books, and the 'KonMari Method' has now become hugely popular overseas, including in the US.
- 5 The suicide rate has been declining since 2011 but still remains high, particularly for men in their thirties and fifties, and the elderly.
- 6 Conceived by the NPO (non-profit organization) Sanyūkai, which raised the funds and built the grave, it is non-denominational, although a Buddhist priest officiates at all burials and memorials. Sociologist Matthew Marr (n.d.) has been writing about and working with Sanyūkai; I thank him for introducing me to its grave project.
- 7 This is a word I heard repeatedly in the course of doing fieldwork on precarity in Japan between 2008 and 2011. Mainly I would hear Japanese say they lacked *ibasho* (*ibasho ga nai*) – a space where they felt comfortable and at home. There was a sense of affective or existential homelessness even for those not physically homeless. I also encountered many attempts to create new *ibasho*, as in a café run by and for *hikikomori* (socially withdrawn youth) in Niigata and in a 'regional living room' – a converted home where anyone could drop in for the day and share tea, lunch and the company of others – also in Niigata (see Allison 2013).

- 8 Sociologist Masahiro Yamada reports that Japanese married couples have the lowest sex rate amongst all industrialized countries. Also, according to his own research, and surveys done by NHK, the rate of young people who report disliking sex is steadily going up, while the rate of junior high students reporting having a crush on someone is steadily going down (presentation at the Kadokawa Summer Programme, 12 July 2016).
- 9 NHK reported on a *kuyō* service held in a Buddhist temple in Chiba for Aibo robots, in summer 2015. In doing research on tamagotchi in the late 1990s, I discovered websites where owners posted requiem to their 'dead' pets (Allison 2006). Offering *kuyō* for pets is a service many pet cemeteries now offer, as in offering *kuyō* for treasured belongings (futon, dolls, cellphones, computers) – a service that many companies handling the clean-up of the belongings of the deceased now offer free of charge (see Yoshida 2011 for an interesting description of the rationale behind this).
- 10 Both these men seemed to be retired white - collar workers.
- 11 As he has written elsewhere (Yoshida 2015: 22–26), the value of property that would be left as inheritance has become precarious itself in recent years; 18 per cent of all houses in Japan are currently 'empty' (*akiya*) (predicted to rise to 30 per cent by 2030), most if not all in the countryside having been abandoned when owners migrated to the cities. Finding upkeep and location undesirable, which may be true too of vacation homes acquired in ski resorts or the seaside, descendants are increasingly renouncing their inheritance (*sōzokuhaiki*) in anticipation that it will be more of a deficit than an asset.
- 12 Similar to the collective grave at San'ya, one has also been built in the Kamagaseki neighbourhood in Osaka for aging day labourers there.
- 13 Ending Centre has recently acquired an empty house and converted it into a meeting place it calls *Mō hitotsu wagaya* – One More Home. Members who have acquired plots in Ending Centre and call one another '*haka tomo*' (grave friends) assemble here for various activities include lunch and making crafts.
- 14 Matsubara Junko, director of Single Smile Senior Life (SSS).

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Afterword

Ghassan Hage

The Ends of Nostalgia: Waiting for the Past-to-Come

'I can't wait to go back, but I'll wait till summer, its nicer and more people will be visiting the village.' Waheed is talking about returning to his village in Lebanon for the first time since he migrated to Australia two years ago. When he uttered this sentence, it was bound to attract my attention with its double usage of the word *wait*. It was 2005. Six years since I formally started working on transnational Lebanese migration and four years since I began thinking about the centrality of hope and waiting when dealing with it. As noted in the Introduction to this book, migration is a rich space where a multiplicity of forms of hope and waiting are entangled. In some ways, Waheed had done them all. When I met him in 2000, he had applied for the first time for a visa to Australia. I saw him queue at the Australian embassy to pick up and pay for his application. 'Only in US dollars' as the sign in the embassy said then. I saw him wait to be interviewed. Hoping/waiting for a visa. Being disappointed. Going through the process twice, waiting, hoping, waiting, hoping (tick, tock, as Craig Jeffrey notes after Frank Kermode in the book's Foreword). And I was in the village waiting for him to come back from Beirut following his third interview when he triumphantly arrived, brandishing his visa. Then there was the process of leaving, with all its micro forms of waiting: from waiting to decide when to leave, to waiting for his mum to come out of hospital, to waiting for his sister to get married, until finally deciding on a day and the long wait until that day arrived, and then the long drive to the airport and the waiting in the airport queues. But no sooner had he arrived – I saw him for the first time in Australia six months after he had arrived – than he was already waiting to be able to go back. I want to dwell on this 'waiting to return' to raise a number of points that go beyond the specificity of migration and that I hope speak productively to some of the many issues and dimensions of waiting treated in this rich book.

The first and perhaps main issue I want to explore is what I have already referred to as the 'entanglement' of forms of waiting. This has to do with the fact that rarely are we just waiting for one thing or another. At any one moment, we are waiting for a multiplicity of things at the same time. Not just in the sense of engaging in a single act of waiting for many things at the same time but in the sense of engaging in many different kinds of waiting for many different things at the same time. This could mean something as banal as a similar kind of waiting but for different objects and with different intensity, such as: 'I am waiting for my eggs and even more eagerly waiting for my coffee.' It could also mean different modes or states of waiting, with different 'temporal horizons', as Bendixsen and Eriksen call them in their chapter: I am waiting in a queue for my visa application but simultaneously I am waiting for the day I will be able to leave for Australia. But we can easily add to this, 'I am waiting to hear from the hospital about my mother's operation' and 'I am also waiting for Saint Anthony to help me make a fortune so I can retire rich back in the village'.

It seems to me that our primary ethnographic material cannot but be this kind of entanglement. It is particularly so if we enter the field and have already primed ourselves to discern forms of waiting. The more ethnographically trained we are and the greater our sensitivity to forms of waiting, the less we have to wait as researchers before we note the complex 'entanglement of waiting(s)' that we are facing. This entanglement is not merely an intermingling of forms that remain separate. It is an entanglement because after a while it becomes hard to know which form of waiting is related to which object (assuming it is a case of waiting for an object, which as many cases in the book show, is not always the case). This entanglement can even produce forms of fusion, particularly since affect circulates freely within the entangled reality. For instance: a person is waiting anxiously for her application papers but she is starting to show signs of impatience, which are transforming into anger. But she also happens to be waiting to hear about her mother in hospital. This entanglement makes it hard to relate a particular affect to a particular waiting. Consequently, when people produce one form of waiting as an ethnographic example, they surely must have already disentangled it from other forms of waiting it coexists with. I think this coexistence of the multiplicity of forms of waiting and the labour of disentanglement we engage in when writing and exemplifying needs to be made more explicit.

Two dimensions of this labour of disentanglement come to the fore here. To the extent that one can distinguish between the two, we can say that one belongs more to a sociological analytic and the other to a more cultural anthropological

one. The sociological dimension begins with a straightforwardly Durkheimian problematic: are certain forms of waiting less individual and more akin to social facts? Clearly, as the ethnographies included in this book show, some forms of waiting are very structured and institutionalized while others appear random and contingent. Some are occasional while others are ritualized. A certain labour of disentanglement needs to be performed at this point to highlight what is institutional and social, what is structural and what is ephemeral. From here we can move to a more Bourdieu-ian register to ask: are there dominant forms of waiting within a given social formation or at a specific historical period? Do they instil themselves into the body in the form of a waiting habitus? If so, and given the transposability of habitus, do these dominant dispositional structures of waiting actually end up shaping how we wait outside the field in which they were historically acquired? And of course we can go further to ask the most quintessential sociological question of all: what are the social and historical conditions for the dominance of certain forms of waiting habitus?

This question, in turn, slowly moves us to a more cultural anthropological domain as we start asking: are certain forms of waiting specific to certain cultures? Are certain people more impatient than others? Do certain people wait more intensely than others? Until we of course get to the equally quintessential cultural anthropological question raised here and there in the book: what is universal and what is culturally specific about waiting? And more particularly, what is the specificity of modern waiting? Is our current age dominated by a particular mode of waiting? Of course, as the Introduction and various chapters of the book show, philosophers such as Arendt, Heidegger or Nietzsche can help us ask these substantial questions and offer some help in shaping the empirical answers. Ethnography, on the other hand, can help us provide more substantial answers while offering some help in shaping the questions. In the same philosophico-ethnographic spirit, what I want to do in the remaining part of this afterword is use the questions that I have formulated above, not so much to answer them as to help me think through what the 'waiting to return' that I began with can tell us about waiting today.

Needless to say, utterances such as 'I can't wait' and 'I'll wait till' are hardly specific to migration. 'I can't wait' denotes a waiting associated with intense desire akin to that referred to by Gabriel Marcel (see Introduction). 'I'll wait till' is an agentive waiting. It is not on the side of agency in the main way that agentive waiting is described in the book, through the opposition between waiting for and waiting to. Rather, it is the agency exhibited in the capacity to 'choose' to wait for. This is best described as the 'waiting of the hunter',

not the one who is anxiously waiting for the prey but the one waiting for, and judging when is, the right moment to catch the right prey: ‘Don’t kill the young fit ones, wait for the fat ones that come behind them, don’t shoot now, wait till they are closer.’ Just as it is full of passive ‘waiting for’ objects and moments that are beyond one’s control, migration is equally replete with such ‘hunting’ moments: ‘don’t leave for Australia, wait, you might get a visa to the US’, ‘don’t go now, wait, you’ll have a better chance to get a job if you leave in winter’.

But both of the above forms of waiting are entangled within a more overarching/macro, and specifically migratory, form of waiting. This is the waiting to return home. This kind of waiting is clearly a social, not just an individual, fact. It is a common and widespread phenomenon. Rare are those who migrate who are not quickly yearning for at least a trip back home, if not a permanent return. What’s more, the waiting (passive and active) to return home is what we can confidently call a nostalgic waiting. It is this nostalgic waiting that I want to call ‘waiting for the past-to-come’.

As anyone who has worked on the phenomenon knows, nostalgia is a lot more than a yearning for the past. Firstly, nostalgia is a yearning/waiting for a past that is perceived to have been lost (that is, perceived to be lacking) in the present. Secondly, it is not a yearning for any kind of past, it is a yearning for an idealized past. Thirdly, it is an active and/or passive yearning/waiting that entertains the possibility that, and as such is hopeful that, such a lacking idealized past will materialize in the future. All of this is part and parcel of the Lebanese migratory yearning to return. First, in the process of migration, Lebanon or the village, the land one imagines to have left behind, ‘back home’, is often slowly yearned for and perceived to be what is lacking in the migratory present. Second, this ‘back home’ is quickly idealized as a place of plenitude and well-being in opposition to the harsh land of migration where a kind of reality principle prevails. Third, most Lebanese emigrants strongly believe in the eventuality of return, even if not all of them are capable of actively pursuing it. The nostalgic waiting for return is therefore a yearning to return to a past that never existed but that is hopefully yet to come. It is in this sense that nostalgic waiting can be called a hopeful waiting for a past-to-come. It therefore takes this general imaginary structure (in the sense of the way it is thought by the nostalgic subject in the present):

Idealized past of plenitude	→	Present as lacking idealized past of plenitude and where the yearning/waiting subject is	→	the future as the past-to- come
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Undoubtedly, this is a form of waiting in that we have a subject negotiating their relation towards the future from the present and with a specific past behind them. Intimations of Arendt's theorization are clear (see Introduction). At the same time, however, it is a specific kind of waiting where the drama of negotiating the future is staged as a desire to regain a lost plenitude. But to what extent is this waiting for the past-to-come unique to the migratory experience? It can be easily argued that this nostalgic waiting is not specific to migration as much as it is specific to modernity. Is not all modern waiting structured by a sense of loss of plenitude caused by industrialization, urbanism, pollution and a yearning for the plenitude of the countryside? Does not modernity by its very nature stage a nostalgic subject who is forever waiting to overcome a sense of loss and alienation? This modern yearning is always a yearning for a past time as well as a past space. It could be argued that what characterizes diasporic waiting and diasporic modernity is that the emphasis on place becomes greater. If the 'classic' modern European waiting is structured by yearning for a predominantly conceived lost time, diasporic waiting is structured by yearning for a predominantly conceived lost place. We can easily see how this modern structure of waiting/yearning sociologically shapes other forms of waiting/yearning/seeking. Are not current forms of white nationalism in the Western world structured in exactly the same nostalgic way, with the white nationalist subject imagining an idealized national past of plenitude (the nation before x, y or z ruined it) and a yearning for a national future that is precisely this idealized past now perceived as forthcoming?

Nonetheless, there are arguments to be made for the universal nature rather than the modern, let alone diasporic, specificity of nostalgic waiting. Such an argument comes from psychoanalysis with the foundational role that 'waiting for the breast' plays in the formation of the human subject. In its Freudian/Lacanian version, this waiting for the breast initiates what is a distinctly nostalgic structure. This is because the moment of waiting is the moment of awareness of a lack of immediacy between needing and receiving. For as long as there is no waiting, there is no consciousness of one's separate existence. It is the moment when we need and have to wait for the breast that we become aware of our separateness. However, this separateness is painful and the moment it is experienced one begins to yearn for an imagined time when it did not exist. That is the imagined moment where there was a kind of fusion between mother and baby and a sense of plenitude that comes from this lack of separateness and the absence of the need to wait. Thus, when we receive the breast, we get what we need (milk) but we do not get what we desire (a return to the state

of fusion with the mother where we imagine that we did not even experience 'need'). Consequently, the desiring subject is a subject structured by nostalgia for this state of plenitude and fusion for the mother, waiting for a past-to-come.

While claiming a certain universality, we don't need a reminder that the psychoanalytic claim is nonetheless a Western claim for universality. Integral to this psychoanalytic argument is a more general phenomenological one about the universality of the nostalgic subject: the very moment of consciousness is a consciousness of 'separation from ...' and a yearning for lack of separation. But this kind of separation rests on a very modern imaginary of the division between nature and culture. Indeed, it does not take too much effort of the imagination to see that what is staged here is an opposition between a state of nature (no separation and plenitude) and a state of culture (separation and alienation), with the subject of culture continuously yearning/waiting for a return to a state of 'being one with nature'. After all, one of the most fundamental manifestations of this imaginary past plenitude/present lack/future as past-to-come remains the structure of monotheist religion as it is present in the Bible, where it takes the form of the Garden of Eden/the fall as the present of the waiting subject/heaven as the yearned for past-to-come.

The question of cultural specificity/universality of the structure of nostalgic waiting ties into the sociological argument presented above: to what extent have we internalized this macro nostalgic structure of waiting and hoping? And to what extent does it play a role in shaping all the micro modes of hoping we engage in. As I write, I am passively and actively waiting for this afterword to finish. Am I also unconsciously imagining in my very waiting and yearning for an end, a state of plenitude, a return to a state of fusion with the mother, a return home and a being one with nature all in one? Indeed, can one yearn/wait non-nostalgically? Perhaps this is an important political question we are facing today.

If nostalgic waiting is structured among other things with a hopeful fantasy of being one with nature 'once again', is this kind of waiting and hopefulness not beginning to crumble in our Anthropocenic age where we have to confront the impossibility of this fantasy of one-ness ever coming to be fantasized again? And if this kind of macro structure of waiting has a determining effect on other micro forms of waiting, expecting, yearning and seeking, perhaps we are in the midst of one of the most radical transformations of the way we experience our position 'between past and future'.

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